THE

FORESTERS.

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A NOVEL.

ALTERED FROM THE FRENCH

BY MISS GUNNING.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

A HISTORY BEGAN.

MONSIEUR DE CORSANGE felt in himſelf, and ſaw in all around him, that when the paſſions are wound up to a certain pitch of exquiſite bliſs, there is mercy in ſtealing away thoſe ideas which are ſoaring with them above humanity, though they are to be replaced

by others leſs pleaſing, but perhaps infinitely more ſalutary; he therefore propoſed to recount his own adventures, a propoſal moſt gratefully received, and having partaken of a ſhort repaſt, he began after this manner:

Love, intereſt, and ambition, are the three ſcourges which deſolated my life! love was my own crime—intereſt ſwayed my barbarous brother—and ambition became the motive of all the vexations which a father heaped upon me. Why do I ſay a father?—he was not my father, and had no claim to that title—nevertheleſs I loved him, I reſpected him, and that timed reſpect has always hindered me from ſhaking off the heavy yoke beneath which he would cruſh me. Alas! without his ſon, without the cruel Chevalier d'Anfort! but I ſee theſe exclamations are a mere enigma to you, my friends; I ought to explain it, and relate the hiſtory of my family—thence

thence I will make a digreſſion upon my misfortunes, therefore attend to me.

My mother, named Aurore Bléville, daughter of the celebrated Count de Bléville, ambaſſador at the court of Madrid in the preceding reign, had a right to command the firſt eſtabliſhment in the kingdom, even more by her beauty and accompliſhments, than from the riches and honours enjoyed by her father; but ſhe had ſeen the handſome Count d'Anfort when very young, and they mutually loved each other, by which predilection ſhe had prevented her heart from making a more ſuitable choice.—This young lover overlooking his inequality, had the imprudence to demand her in marriage. The old Count, offended by his preſumption, complained to the king, who honoured him with ſingular teſtimonies of his favour, and by the royal authority the Count d'Anfort was ordered abroad, and my mother

confined to a convent, out of which ſhe was taken ſome months after to eſpouſe the Marquis de Corſange, the king's chief favourite, an amiable man, endowed with all ſorts of fine qualities, who entertained no idea that ſhe married him with reluctance, much leſs that he was indebted for her hand to an exertion of paternal authority, which might deſervedly be called compulſion; however, her conduct as a wife was ſtrictly irreproachable, and if ſhe did not love my father, ſhe certainly very much reſpected him.

I was the offspring of this marriage, and my mother experiencing for me all the attachment of maternal fondneſs, began to be accuſtomed to her preſent ſtate of conjugal union, when ſuddenly a cruel incident revived in her heart the ſparks of her former paſſion, and rekindled thoſe hopes which had expired in giving her hand to the Marquis.

Soon

Soon after my birth our country became involved in a war with Germany; my grandfather and my father took an active part in this, for me, fatal war—alas! they fell together on the field of battle, fighting side by side—when you have heard all, you will admit that I have cause for sorrow at this retrospection.

My mother, released from those who alone had the power to curb her inclinations, now suffered them to rebel without controul, and as soon as decency would permit she gave me a stepfather in the Count d'Anfort—she was no more than six and twenty, her husband about thirty; but what I have most to regret from her new connection, was her imprudence in breaking with all my father's family.

No part of it would see her, or assist me, when afterwards I was compelled by

my misfortunes to ſolicit their protection.

At firſt I was brought up under the eye of Monſieur and Madame d'Anfort with unbounded indulgence; but at the end of two years, when ſhe preſented him with a ſon, myſelf with a brother, my abundant conſequence in the houſe viſibly began to decreaſe—I could not but perceive this change—child as I was, I had even the courage to complain of it to my mother.

"It is very well, Monſieur," replied ſhe, in a ſevere tone, "you ſhall no longer have occaſion to find fault with your home—to-morrow you go to college to try if you will like that better."

She ſent me from her preſence, and I paſſed the whole of that day in the firſt affliction I had ever experienced, for

for I ſaw by the preparations made by my ſervant that the Counteſs's threat was by no means equivocal.

In the morning, when all was ready for my departure, I went to take leave of my mother, my eyes were full of tears, and I ran to embrace her; but obſerving that ſhe turned her back, my heart tightened; I was running out of the room to hide my ſorrow, when the Count catching me in his arms, and preſſing me between them, gently ſlid into my hand a little purſe, aſſuring me, with great affection, that if I was reaſonable and ſtudious, he would fetch me to the hotel once every month—my mother alſo came towards me, kiſſed my cheek, coldly enough bidding me be a good boy—theſe careſſes a little calmed my agitation, and ſhortly after I ſat out with my *valet de chambre* for the college of Navarre. Dear William, you know

enough of that place to make any deſcription of it unneceſſary.

At college I was received by a tutor who waited for me, one for whom it was impoſſible my heart could be inſpired either with love or reſpect—he was entirely made up of Latin and Greek, and who only added to my melancholy during all the time I had to ſpend in that priſon.

William ſmiled.

"You are diverted at my deſcription," ſaid his father; "perhaps in giving a likeneſs of my college preceptor I am drawing the picture of your own."

"I cannot," replied our hero, "I wiſh not to diſguiſe from ſo dear a parent any of my thoughts; nor can I hardly believe but the ſame man had the

the care of my education as well as of yours."

"I am flattered by hearing you ſay I am ſo good a painter—but to proceed:—I was then twelve years of age, and began to feel that my mother's frigid coolneſs was a real and tormenting ſource of ſorrow—whence could it ariſe?—had I been wanting in reſpect to her—had I behaved ill—or ſuppoſing this had been the caſe, ſhould ſhe not have made ſome allowances for a boy whoſe age was ſo tender? yet the Count's goodneſs—the Count's careſſes had replaced her more than ever in my filial fondneſs; from that moment I loved her as much as if ſhe had never diſpleaſed me."

Hearts of ſenſibility have no ſteadineſs in their opinions—a harſh expreſſion will grieve the one and diſcard the other—the leaſt offering of ſentiment

of kinds draws back their affections even faſter than they retreated—it is equally eaſy to make happy, or to afflict the heart of ſenſibility.

During the firſt year of my ſtudies I had often the ſatisfaction of going to the hotel—the ſecond they came to fetch me leſs frequently—the third was very ſeldom marked by this indulgence—and from that time they entirely neglected me.

One friend was my only ſolace—we were of the ſame age, and nearly of the ſame humour—this beloved youth attached himſelf to me with indeſcribable affection—we were hardly ever ſeparated—now he pitied my ſituation—now endeavoured to ſooth it.

"Ah! Arzéle! ever adorable Arzéle," cried the Marquis, interrupting his narrative, "I ſee how much the mention

mention of this exquiſite friend afflicts thee. Pardon me, gentlemen, if to ſpare her feelings for the preſent I draw a curtain before ſome circumſtances, which will preſently cover me with confuſion."

Dulays was then fatherleſs—his mother, who loved him tenderly, lived at Dreux, and never came to Paris; but her ſon regularly ſpent the holidays with her.

Madame Dulays waited for that period with as much impatience as I felt ſorrow at its approach—at the times of his abſence, alone in the college, bereft of my friends and parents, during two months of the year I had no other reſource than applying to my ſtudies to prevent me from eternally ſhedding the tears of cruel reflections!—youthful ſtage of life, with what bitterneſs haſt thou been annoyed!

This friend, this dear Dulays, left me for three months at the time of vacation to viſit his widowed mother, by whom, as I have ſaid, he was tenderly beloved in his abſence—when I had been ſix years at college, a ſervant from my ſtepfather came to me in great haſte, to let me know that my mother was dying.

"O Heavens!" cried I, "by what accident?"

"By no accident; ſhe has been ill more than two months."

"Two months, and I ſuffered to remain all that time ignorant of her danger?"

"Madame would not permit it—it is only this morning that ſhe has aſked for you—come, Monſieur, or we ſhall not find her alive."

I did

I did not know how well I loved this cruel mother, till the grief I felt for her danger fully explained the powers of Nature over a heart not perverted by vicious courſes; I flew to the carriage which waited for me, and in a little time found myſelf in the preſence of Madame d'Anfort.

"My ſon," ſaid ſhe, in a weak and faltering tone of voice, "death only waits the moment of your arrival. I am dying—I leave you a good father in Monſieur le Count—I have declared him your ſole guardian—he will condeſcend to take upon himſelf the ſuperintendance of the fortune of your father the Marquis de Corſange. I give him uncontrouled authority over you—obey him with the ſame duty you would obey me, and remember that you trample on my aſhes, and will afflict me even in the tomb which opens to ſwallow me, ſhould you be wanting in gratitude."

She

She ſtopped, and ſtruggled for breath to proceed.

I preſſed my mother's hand, bathed it with my tears, and very ſoon ſhe added, pointing to the little D'Anfort, "Behold your brother! I command you both to live in cloſe intimacy, and to love one another till death ſhall ſeparate you—have I your promiſe?"

I ſtammered out a few incoherent words—my brother anſwered "Yes;" his voice interrupted by ſobs.

The Count leaned on her bolſter—the Chevalier d'Anfort ſtood by his ſide—I knelt by the bed, hiding my eyes in the clothes. Once more my mother would have ſpoke—words were not lent her—but ſnatching my brother in her arms, and preſſing him to her boſom, ſhe expired at that moment. I envied him for receiving the laſt regards

gards of my mother—I did not—I could not love a child who would give me no ſhare in the affections of my parent—alas! his father was beloved—mine was not.

The Count expreſſed for me a great deal of friendſhip: however, he deſired two days after the death of my mother that I would return to college—I had no wiſh to prolong my viſit, and conſented to obey him; upon which he embraced me, vowing to me eternal friendſhip. Oh, what a cordial did I find for my wounded mind, when I ſaw the dear Dulays ſtanding at the gate of our college, juſt arrived from his excurſion!

I ſoon informed him of all that had happened to me, and we both agreed that I ought ever to be on my guard againſt the Count and his ſon: and yet, how ſhall I confeſs my weakneſs—this very

very Count ſeemed to occupy the place of a father in my heart—I reſpected him—I did more, I loved him—he had gained ſuch an aſcendancy over me, that I hardly dared open my lips before him—good God, how unfortunate the effects of this timidity!

I remained at College two years longer—the Count conſtantly ſent for me once a fortnight, when his extreme goodneſs to me very much augmented my attachment to him.

My brother, now fourteen years old, would not permit me to love him—his *hauteur*, his impudence, his reſerve could only engage my contempt—he always called me Monſieur, and never ſpoke civilly to me, except in the preſence of his father, who wiſhed we might live well together—yet all his love, all his approbation centered in the little man; nor

nor would he open his eyes to ſee the diſreſpect with which he himſelf was very often treated by the ſtrutting monarch of his ill-governed family.

All his faults, all his unruly humours, were, I am convinced, cauſed by my mother, who made him the object of her idolatry. From his earlieſt infancy ſhe indulged him in all his whims, all his caprices; he reigned with deſpotic ſway over all the domeſtics, and the commands of a child were to be a ſacred law to thoſe who were appointed to wait upon him.

If chance ever made her mention my name to him, it was always to ſay to him, "My little D'Anfort—my darling child—I love thee more, and will cheriſh thee more than I can love, or will cheriſh thy brother;" with a hundred ſimilar expreſſions, which I was informed

informed ſerved to foſter the boy's vanity, and to inſpire him with the moſt ſovereign contempt for the ſon of his mother.

His father, on the other hand, in ſpite of all the friendſhip he profeſſed for me, made him the ſole object of his tenderneſs—that good father even carried his love to a degree of almoſt unpardonable weakneſs; nay, ſo far, that the little Chevalier often behaved to him with inſufferable diſreſpect, till at length the father's indulgence became as exceſſive as the ſon's arrogance.

I ſhould often have quarrelled with his extreme impertinence, if I had not ſeen that our quarrels gave a great deal of trouble to my guardian, and that he always thought his own ſon to be in the right.

The

The boy's inſults at laſt became ſo frequent, and levelled at me with ſo childiſh a ſpite, that they rather appeared to deſerve my contempt than my reſentment. I did not foreſee that my compliance in yielding to his ſpirit would one day coſt me ſo dearly, and that this ſtripling would ſoon aſſume ſuch rights over me as has rendered my life truly miſerable.

In the time of his widowhood the Count had invited his ſiſter, who was extremely rich, to reſide with him; this lady had never been married, and intended her fortune for the Chevalier, of whom ſhe was fooliſhly fond, calling him her little Pet, her little *bijou*, and could hardly find expreſſions ſtrong enough to declare her affections; yet ſhe was alſo kind to me, nor grudged the many proofs of regard I received from her brother: thus was I entangled in

reſpect

reſpect for them all, and even with ſomething like complacency for the bijou of the infatuated family.

I had arrived at the age of twenty, my education finiſhed, and the Count impatient that I ſhould make choice of a profeſſion: I choſe the army, though the church was moſt ſtrongly recommended; he hoped by my living unmarried my fortune would deſcend to my brother, or his children; but finding me averſe to taking the vows, he would not force my inclinations; he bought me a lieutenancy in the regiment de Condé.

Dulays, like me, had quitted his ſtudies, and ſet himſelf down at the bar; we conſtantly ſaw each other—he almoſt lived with us, and was an univerſal favourite in the family of my guardian—yet we ſpent hours ſeparated from them

them in walking, reading, or converſation.

One day that women happened to be our ſubject, Dulays painted the paſſion of love as a fable, and called marriage a priſon, where our liberty is bound in chains never to be broken but at the expence of reputation; ſaying how impolitic it was to repoſe our honour in the keeping a wife, all women being full of caprice and levity.

Doubtleſsly he argued like an inexperienced young man, but I liſtened to his arguments; the reſult was, a mutual oath never to marry—a fooliſh, ſenſeleſs promiſe, never made but when the paſſions lay dormant in our breaſt—frail ſtructure, which the ſlighteſt blaſt can overthrow—to my ſorrow, I felt it but too much afterwards.

Having

Having bound ourſelves never, whilſt we lived, to form any ſerious engagement with the other ſex, our next ſtep on the road of folly was to make a confidant, who made others, until our ſecret became quite public.

The Count d'Anfort, who was a man of parts, enjoyed our whole confidence; we concealed nothing from him—of courſe was ſo imprudent as to reveal to him the reſolution we had ſo unadviſedly taken.

The proſpect flattered his views—he ſeconded our raſhneſs—he beſtowed on me a thouſand eulogiums, and haſtened to communicate my wiſdom to the reſt of his family—they would hear it from my own lips—they came to me for that purpoſe—and when they found that I had actually bound myſelf by an oath never to ſubmit to a ſtate of ſervitude,

or

or rather ſlavery, for the fineſt woman that the world ever produced, we all made ourſelves very merry on the occaſion, and nobody more ſo than the beaux Chevalier, who from this time ſeemed to love his dear brother even more than his own father.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE GODMOTHER.

THE Count d'Anfort was not perfectly ſatisfied with my determination of remaining ſingle, until it had been communicated to Madame d'Eyelle my godmother.

This old Counteſs intended me for her heir, though in fact ſhe partook of the common blindneſs, and her fondneſs for the Chevalier made her hear of my intentions with a great deal of pleaſure—

ſure—ſoon after being taken dangerouſly ill, ſhe ſent for all our family; when ſeeing us aſſembled about her bed, "Corſange," ſaid ſhe, "the moſt tender friendſhip bound me to your father; I gave you your name—I have promiſed you my fortune—I alſo love your brother—and as you are determined never to marry, I expect, before I make you my univerſal legatee, that you ſign, in preſence of theſe witneſſes, never to change your ſingle ſtate, and that at your death your amiable brother ſhall ſucceed to your fortune."

Thinking it impoſſible my reſolutions ſhould ever waver, I very readily ſigned to theſe conditions, and the Counteſs expired.

Her fortune amounted to more than ten thouſand pounds a year, yet as ſhe did not make me of age till three and twenty, my guardian, in the mean time,

took upon himſelf the management of this great addition to my fortune.

How bewildered muſt I have been by my philoſophy, when I conſented to all, and ſigned all.—The moment I had finiſhed my own deſtruction the Count demanded the deed of renunciation, which I delivered to him at the inſtant that death had made a prey of the Counteſs.

He took upon himſelf the adminiſtration of this new eſtate till I ſhould be of age—I had undone myſelf, and repented not: Dulays, equally intoxicate with the reaſoning of folly, endeavoured to confirm me in my principles, and ſucceeded. Alas! my friends, you will ſoon diſcover to what a cataſtrophe my imprudent conduct betrayed me. Theſe particulars have perhaps been tedious to you; they are nevertheleſs neceſſary to lead you to the more intereſting

reſting part of my adventures—prepare yourſelves to hear a ſeries of horrors, and unjuſt actions, brooded by the blackeſt and moſt baleful malignity.

After this regulation I thought no man living more happy than myſelf—the compliments, the careſſes beſtowed upon me, were new and delightful.—My dear Dulays ſhared them with me, and never intending to marry, he did not feel the leſs comfortable for having me the companion of his frolic.

Madame d'Anfort, that ſiſter of my guardian who preſided over his family, informed us that ſhe had received pleaſing intelligence from her intimate friend the Baron d'Arceville.

This Baron d'Arceville, who had many years been a widower, lived with his daughter on one of his eſtates. He frequently wrote to Madame d'Anfort,

who had been very intimate with his late wife.

" We are going," ſaid ſhe, as we all met at breakfaſt, " to have an agreeable addition to our ſociety—this good man, who lives very retired at a great diſtance, is to commit his only child to my care, during an excurſion he makes from home on urgent affairs — this daughter," added ſhe, looking at the Chevalier, " is a lovely young creature, and when we have her amongſt us I hope we ſhall not eaſily part with her."

This intelligence neither affected me one way nor another: I was a declared bachelor, and of courſe heard it with the utmoſt indifference.

The Baron d'Arceville had mentioned the day on which he might be expected to arrive with his daughter; and Madame d'Anfort, enraptured with the confidence

confidence which her friend was going to repoſe in her, ordered an apartment to be prepared for him, and another for her young pupil. "You ſhall ſee Mademoiſelle d'Arceville," would ſhe ſay to us every now and then, "ſhe is ſo handſome!—My God, how handſome! How very—very handſome. I have no children—ſhe ſhall be my daughter. Oh, how pleaſed ſhall I be—how delighted—how happy ſhall we all be in this beautiful acquiſition to our ſociety—to-morrow—yes, to-morrow we ſhall embrace this little treaſure—it is to-morrow that the Baron bids us expect them."

To-morrow came—the expected to-morrow came—it paſſed by, and we ſaw nothing of them—our governante began to fret a little at this diſappointment, which very much increaſed at the cloſe of another, without hearing any news of her expected viſitors; but on the eve of

the third ſhe ran to embrace the Baron, who entered the ſaloon alone, pale, trembling, and diſordered.

"My God!" cried Madame d'Anfort, "why is it, my dear friend, that I ſee you in this ſtate?—What is the reaſon I do not ſee Mademoiſelle with you?"

The Baron threw himſelf into a chair—"I have no daughter," replied he, burſting into tears.

"O Heavens! is ſhe dead?—Of that I am ignorant."

"You ignorant?"

"Yes, but hear me, and judge of my affliction."

As we came near the Fauxbourgs de Nevers, followed only by one ſervant, a man in a cabriolet drove furiouſly againſt

againſt my carriage, and we narrowly eſcaped being overturned..

"Monſieur," ſaid I, tranquilly, "take care of what you are doing."

He anſwered me roughly, in tones of ſuperiority, which I as haughtily told him I did not underſtand. Upon my ſaying this, he had the inſolence to ſtrike me with his whip: I jumped upon the ground—drew my ſword—we fought with violence, and I had the misfortune to leave him dead on the ſpot—the ſcreams of my daughter made me return to my chaiſe, and whip up my horſes; whilſt the ſtranger's valet took his flight a contrary way—we met with no more obſtructions till towards night, when we were overtaken by a poſt-chaiſe; four men alighted from it, one of whom gave me a blow on the head, which deprived me of my recollection, and when it returned Arzelia was no longer by my

ſide. My valet-de-chambre Joſeph told me the wretches had taken her away—that he had ſtruggled with them, but was greatly overpowered.

In ſhort, I had loſt my dear Arzelia—I know not whither ſhe has been carried! I ſtepped again into my carriage, and here you ſee me forlorn and cruelly injured.

"What a fatal adventure!" cried Mademoiſelle d'Anfort, "and what do you think of it?"

"I can form no judgement whatever, with any probability: the young man who inſulted me was dead—I had laid him low on the ground—who then can have robbed me of my poor Arzelia?"

Here the poor Baron ended his ſad recital, weeping bitterly. We all offered

fered to accompany him to the miniſter who was the moſt likely perſon to diſcover the bottom of this buſineſs—he accepted our propoſal, and we went to his houſe. The miniſter was equally embarraſſed with ourſelves, but promiſed to uſe his utmoſt vigilance to find out the aggreſſor.

Our conference being ended, we returned to Paris, and got out of our carriage at the Thuilleries, where the Count deſired us to wait till he had tranſacted a ſhort buſineſs with ſome one who lived in the caſtle; but he ſtaid ſo long, that night was growing upon us, and the Baron ſo impatient to conſult farther with him, that bidding me expect them by the ſide of the turning bridge, he ran himſelf to inquire what was become of the Count.

As I ſtood examining the colonade of the palace, a ſecret inquietude took poſſeſſion of my heart—many men of bad appearance ſeemed to have followed us as we walked in the Thuilleries, and ſtill they continued near me.

Night commenced its approaches with haſty ſtrides—I was almoſt enveloped with darkneſs—the gloom carried with it ſomething of unuſual terror, or my fears gave it that complection: the uneaſineſs I felt is altogether indeſcribable. What could theſe ſuſpicious people want with me?—Did they ſuſpect me of any crime?—Were they peace officers, or were they enemies who had formed deſigns on my life? Such were the reflections I made, and I was even going to ſpeak to one of them, when the ſtopping of a carriage prevented me.

Two

Two men who got out of it joined the others, and having whiſpered together before I could provide for my ſafety, they all at once ruſhed upon me, ſtopped my mouth, and forced me into the chaiſe, which drove away with indeſcribable velocity.

Diſarmed and terrified, it was in vain for me to make reſiſtance, but I civilly aſked my guards ſome queſtions, which they only anſwered by ſhaking their heads; and I had nothing for it but to wait in ſilence the termination of an event ſo ſingular—they travelled two days with the blinds conſtantly ſhut, which made it impoſſible for me to diſtinguiſh when we were in towns, or when in the country: they offered me ſeveral times refreſhments, which they carried with them, but I refuſed them, although more than half ſtarved by my obſtinate perſeverance.

Judge of my fright and conſternation—I queſtioned my guards, none of them anſwered me—defenceleſs as I was, I could not make the leaſt reſiſtance—I was forced to wait in ſilence the iſſue of ſo extraordinary an event: but how I ſuffered—you may form yourſelf an idea of my ſituation, if you only put yourſelf for a moment in my place.

On the third night we ſtopped in a ſpacious court before an edifice which had more the appearance of a caſtle than a private houſe, and going up ſome ſteps, entered a handſome ſaloon, well lighted, with a table ſet out in great order, on which was ſpread the moſt delicious viands. I was aſked if I choſe ſupper.

"No, barbarians!" I replied, "haſten to ſtrike your victim."

They ſaid no more, but conducted me

me into a large gloomy chamber entirely hung with black, in the middle of which ſtood a coffin raiſed on four ſtools; ſome bougies gave a ſtinted light to an old man, who with tears flowing from his eyes cried out, as he knelt by the coffin, "Thou ſhalt be revenged, my ſon, not by the laws, they are too lenient for my fury. Approach," added he, regarding me with deſperation, "and receive from my hand a ſimilar blow to that with which thou haſt pierced my ſon."

I pitied his woes, though I did not underſtand the nature of his complaint, yet an impulſe of fear withheld me from advancing: he roſe up in a rage and came towards me, when looking ſtedfaſtly on my face, he turned to one of the men, who appeared to be a valet, and ſaid to him, "Awkward fellow, thou haſt done ill, this is not Monſieur; what buſineſs have I with this gentleman?

man?—let him begone preſently—directly."

You cannot conceive how much theſe few words of the old man calmed me—I, who believed myſelf deſtined to be offered up a victim to the remains of that ſon I had never known—ſaw myſelf at once freed from danger through a miſtake made by the ſervants. Oh, what comfort diffuſed itſelf in my heart!

My guide took me by the hand, leading me back to the ſaloon, and again invited me to eat; to which now that my mind was at eaſe, I had not the ſmalleſt objection; but placing myſelf at table, my long faſt prepared me for making a good ſupper.

In hopes of drawing ſomething from the miſtaken valet, who ſtill attended me, I was going to aſk him ſome queſtions,

tions, when the coachman came in to ſay that he was ready; upon which notice they tied a bandage over my eyes, led me to the carriage, and the ſame ſervant entered it with me, at which I exceedingly rejoiced, expecting that now my curioſity would be gratified; the temptation of an hundred louis, which I carried in my purſe, touched the heart of my *compagnon de voyage*, who expreſſed the greateſt contrition for his miſtake—but what finiſhed the entire conqueſt of it was, the promiſe made him, that if by obliging me he ſhould loſe the favour of his maſter, I would take him into my own ſervice. He declared himſelf ſatisfied both as to my honour and generoſity, when from his communication I was ſoon let into the ſecret hiſtory of this revengeful buſineſs.

The old man, whom I left behind me in the houſe of mourning, was father of him

him who a few days before was ſlain for his inſolence by the Baron d'Arceville. The valet who gave me this intelligence was at the time his only attendant; he ſaw him fall, and getting aſſiſtance from the next village, conveyed the body to the houſe of his old maſter, who, overwhelmed with ſorrow, ordered how it ſhould be diſpoſed of. He commanded the lighteſt of his carriages to be made ready, and with five armed domeſtics followed the ſame road taken by the Baron; that valet, who was now my friend, aſſuring him that he ſhould know the man as well as the chaiſe amongſt a thouſand.

You have already heard how the Baron and his daughter were overtaken by their purſuers, and what was the event of this meeting. The old man, who gave the blow by which he was ſtunned, finding by his cries that the lady he conducted

ducted was his daughter, reſolved to ſatiate his vengeance with her blood; but the trampling of horſes at a diſtance ſtopped for the preſent his murderous intention, which to execute more at his leiſure, he cauſed her, fainting as ſhe was, to be borne off, and conveyed to his chateau: that the next day he diſpatched the ſame ſervant, with a train of domeſtics, all diſguiſed, to find out the lady's father, and force him to the chateau, that he might witneſs the ſacrifice of a daughter to the remains of his ſon.

The valet had caught a glimpſe of him on the Thuilleries, but whilſt he went to bring up the carriage the Baron was gone; the others ſtaid to watch my motions, not knowing one from the other; and in the darkneſs of the night I was taken away inſtead of the old Baron. "Wretches! it is Arzelia," I exclaimed,

I exclaimed—" O Heaven! proceed in your ſtory."

My guide then confeſſed to me, that on the firſt appearance of day he found out his miſtake, yet dared not to acknowledge it from the apprehenſions he entertained of his maſter's diſpleaſure, the moſt cruel, violent, and vindictive of mankind.

The valet having finiſhed, I ſupplicated, that if it were poſſible, we might unite together in the glorious enterpriſe of ſaving the young creature ſo innocently doomed to deſtruction. He ſhook his head—" Do what I require of you, my friend," ſaid I, " and your reward ſhall be three hundred louis."

" Would you give me your whole fortune," he replied, " it would ſignify nothing,

nothing, except we could get the coachman in our intereſt."

I that moment ſtopped the carriage, and calling him to the ſide of it, found the means to make him my own: immediately I ordered him to carry us back to the chateau, which was only one league from Newes.

The night favoured our project—the family were all in bed—my colleague had a maſter key, with which he let himſelf into the houſe, and entered the priſon of Arzelia, whom he ſoon brought to the carriage where I waited for her.

How impatient was I to ſee the fair captive—no ſooner is ſhe ſeated by my ſide than we leave the place with the utmoſt precipitation.

I ſhall

I ſhall not repeat the ſpontaneous thanks of the Baron's daughter—her misfortunes—her youth—her father's imbittered groans—his lamentations—every thing conſpired to give me the tendereſt intereſt in her preſervation.

CHAP. III.

THE LIBERATOR TAKEN CAPTIVE.

I Did not want the aſſiſtance of day to impreſs my heart with a full ſenſe of the value of my prize: the warmth—the energy—the elegance of her language—the tones of her voice, made me think of the raſh vow I had taken never to marry; but when the early rays of morning expoſed to my view a countenance brighter than Aurora's, I curſed my precipitancy—my eyes, my tongue, my ears, my whole ſenſes were captivated

vated—it was a firſt paſſion—it was a love at firſt ſight—it was unruly, domineering, imperious, and irreſiſtible.

Arzelia, the touching Arzelia, in her turn proved ſimilar emotions—ſhe did not diſguiſe them, but ſhe called them gratitude. Theſe mutual ſentiments were ſo far ripened by the time we arrived at Paris, that eyes the leaſt clear-ſighted muſt have diſcovered the ſecret intelligence of our hearts.

At Montargis I hired a poſt-boy to convey back the old man's carriage, to whom I wrote a few lines without my name or addreſs, to let him know I was going to have the good fortune of reſtoring an amiable daughter to a deſerving father, whoſe only fault had been the chaſtiſing an inſolent and inhuman ſtripling, perhaps with too much rigour; threatening him, that if he ever again

again attempted to invade their tranquillity, his infamous and illegal proceeding ſhould be expoſed at the bar of juſtice, ſupported by two individuals who had been the witneſſes of his enormities, and by the depoſition of the innocent victim whom he intended to ſacrifice. This was indeed the expedient I ſhould have made uſe of when I firſt left the caſtle, rather than have liberated his prey by ſtratagem, but the remedy was too violent—it threatened, I feared, the life of Arzelia, which was already dear to me, though ignorant as yet of the great loſs I ſhould have ſuſtained, had ſhe ſuffered the fate that alarmed me.

We found the Hotel d'Anfort plunged in the greateſt conſternation. D'Arceville and my guardian not finding me at the turning bridge, ſuppoſed I was gone home without them, but were diſappointed — every day added to their anxiety

anxiety—no news arrived from me—all inquiries after me were made in vain, and at laſt my guardian perſuaded himſelf that I muſt have been aſſaſſinated, and he ſincerely wept for my ſuppoſed misfortune—as to Madame d'Anfort, ſhe appeared inconſolable—the Chevalier, my brother, had pretty well conquered his grief, and began to talk of his ſucceſſion. As to the Baron, deſpairing that he ſhould ever again behold his daughter, he had ſet off on his long journey on the very evening of our return to Paris—he ſaid to his friend Madame d'Anfort, as he was making his melancholy adieus, "If ever my loſt Arzelia ſhould be reſtored to us, ſhe will fly to you for protection—open your arms to receive the dear injured girl, whatever may be her ſituation."

"This, Madame, is the ſervice I exact of your friendſhip—but what do I ſay?—ſhe is loſt to me, and to you alſo

alſo—my Arzelia is loſt—ah! no doubt ſhe is dead—the monſters who raviſhed her from me have made her the victim of their vengeance. Adieu! my friends! far from this abode I will terminate my wretched career; the world is a wilderneſs to me, ſince my beloved daughter has been torn from my embraces."

The Count and Madame d'Anfort, who were alſo overwhelmed with ſorrows of their own, tried, but tried in vain, to comfort and detain their friend—he departed from them to the increaſe of their miſery.

Gueſs, what muſt have been the ſtate of this dear Arzelia, to find her father gone before ſhe had embraced him, and before he was aſſured of her ſafety. Madame d'Anfort diſpatched a meſſenger after him, but it was too late, though the hope that it might not be ſo contri-

buted a little to the eaſe of my adorable charge.

The joy occaſioned by my return was pretty univerſal, only my brother did not expreſs it quite ſo ſtrongly as the reſt of the family; yet he, like the others, congratulated me on my good fortune in recovering ſo precious a treaſure as Mademoiſelle d'Arceville.

He had two looks that accompanied his expreſſion, one of admiration, the other of envy; the latter which he conferred on me I did not feel, but the ardency with which he gazed on my lovely charge filled me with ſo much diſpleaſure, that I wiſhed he had been any thing in the world rather than my brother.

Grief had made no ſuch ravages for my unaccountable abſence as on the features

features of my dear Dulays—but ah! how were they illuminated with tranſport as he preſſed me to his honeſt heart, congratulating himſelf more than he did me on our unexpected re-union.

Madame d'Anfort did not wait the return of him whom ſhe had ſent after the Baron—ſhe foreſaw the little likelihood there was that he ſhould be overtaken, but ſent off another expreſs to the iſland of Oléron; by this prudent precaution peace was re-eſtabliſhed in the boſom of Arzelia, notwithſtanding the firſt meſſenger returned from his purſuit unſucceſsful.

My brother now became ſo deſperately in love with my miſtreſs, that I hated the very ſight of him; the more ſo, as I did not dare to reveal to any but herſelf what were the ſentiments I entertained for her—we had opened our hearts to each other—we underſtood ourſelves—

nobody elſe underſtood us. But as the Chevalier did not regard her with indifference, and enamoured eyes being ever more prying than thoſe of friendſhip, he was the firſt to diſcover our concealed but mutual affection.

Dulays was the only perſon admitted to our confidence—it made him unhappy—ah! how cruelly did he repent of that fatal renunciation which he had innocently been the cauſe of promoting by the fantaſtical picture he had drawn of love and marriage; all he could now do was to pity and ſware to us eternal fidelity in all the plans we might project for our happineſs.

This indulgence to our weakneſs was our deſtruction, ſtrengthened by his friendly aſſiſtance—we contracted a private marriage, without waiting for the anſwer from Arzelia's father, or for my majority.

We

We were all at a country houſe belonging to Madame d'Anfort, and one morning when the Count, his ſon, and ſiſter, were ſleeping, Dulays, myſelf, Arzelia, and her woman, repaired to the chapel of a convent at a little diſtance, where every thing being before prepared by the friendly Dulays, we were united for ever.

At eight o'clock we were again at the chateau, where we found the family were waiting breakfaſt for us; they rallied us on our early walk, pretending to be angry that we had not aſked them to be of the party. I do not think we were ſuſpected by any body but the Chevalier, who from that moment environed us round with his ſecret ſpies; and though he could not diſcover that we were really married, he was told more of our ſtolen intimacy than he liked to hear, having made to Arzelia the moſt unequivocal declarations.

How enraged muſt he have been! fruſtrated in all his deſigns—all his declarations of love rejected—he deteſted me—he envied me the poſſeſſion of ſuperior property—in ſhort, he thought of nothing ſo much as to force my compliance of the engagement into which I had entered, not only that he might poſſeſs my fortune but my miſtreſs.

He ſaw me animated by love, and ready to form ties which he ſuppoſed the Baron would ſanction, becauſe I had preſerved his daughter—ſtung to death with jealouſy, avarice, and vengeance, he ſhut himſelf up with his father and aunt to tell them his own ſtory in his own way.

All the tranſports of hatred, jealouſy, rage, and vengeance, ſeizing upon his heart, he began with informing his father and aunt with all he knew, and carried matters ſo far as to inſiſt that I ſhould

ſhould be ſent to a priſon, and Arzelia to a convent—violent and impracticable proceedings, no doubt but too moderate for the inſults he pretended to have received.

They liſtened to the complainer, as it might be expected they would do, particularly as he cried, ſcreamed, and tore his hair the whole time he was ſpeaking to them of his wrongs, threatening to kill himſelf if the Count did not treat me with the utmoſt rigour.

The old man, very much terrified, promiſed him all that he ſhould deſire, and thus endeavoured to conſole him. Madame d'Anfort agreed to ſpeak to Arzelia, and I was ſent for to attend my guardian in his cloſet.

We were wholly ignorant of the Chevalier's artifices, vainly ſuppoſing that our loves, a perfect myſtery to all

but ourſelves, and the parties concerned in our marriage. What then muſt have been my ſurpriſe, when, having obeyed the ſummons of my guardian in his cabinet, he ſpoke to me after this manner:

"Monſieur," ſaid he, "I know all—I know that you have fancied yourſelf to be in love with Mademoiſelle d'Arceville, and that you think ſhe returns your ſuppoſed paſſion. What is to be the end of this folly?—a marriage it cannot be—remember you are ſelf-reſtricted from that ſtate. What then, Monſieur, is it that you pretend to from your preference of the Baron's daughter. If you feel any thing like gratitude for my care of you, or reſpect for your mother's memory, you will never again ſpeak to that young perſon, but immediately join your regiment, which is gone to winter quarters in Beſancon; there you will mix with men of the world,

world, who will laugh you out of your ſilly attachment, and make you forget Arzelia, who, to ſpeak plainly, I intend for your brother."

"My brother! Sir."

"Yes, Sir; your brother."

"Never, whilſt I have life."

"Dare you uſe this language to your father? Recollect that I can employ ſuch methods——"

I interrupted him—he held out a threat that ſtung me.

"What are theſe methods, Monſieur? I fear them not—Arzelia loves me—I adore her—there is nothing of imagination in all this—that promiſe which you threaten me with—that raſh promiſe, it

was made at an age that renders it invalid."

"Not at all, my young gentleman—it will remain unſhaken—the laws are not——"

"Tyrants, and the laws, will not decide on the validity of ſuch engagements."

He threw on me a look that chilled me with horror, and ſternly exclaimed—

"You have loſt your reſpect, audacious youth, as well as your ſenſes—go from my ſight, and never again preſume to blaſt it with thy ungrateful preſence till better inſtructed in the leſſon of obedience."

I wiſhed to ſpeak—I knew not what to ſay—I lifted my heavy eyes from the ground—I expected to meet thoſe of my

my angry guardian—he was gone—and I went out to ſhare with my wife thoſe ſorrows I could not reſtrain.

Alas! I met this dear creature already diſſolved in tears.

"Fly, fly," cried ſhe, "do not ſpeak to me—fly, my dear huſband, or they will take away your life."

At this inſtant we ſaw Madame d'Anfort coming towards us—her terrors redoubled.

"Leave me, for God's ſake! Madame d'Anfort—I am going to ſacrifice myſelf for you—but wait you the return of my father."

She fled with theſe words to Madame d'Anfort, and I ſaw them depart in a carriage, without knowing whither they were going.

I would

I would have followed them, but the ſervants prevented me, by order of their cruel miſtreſs—I broke from their graſp—I ran raving over the houſe, ſcreaming for my brother, and could I have found him our meeting muſt have been fatal.

The dear Dulays providentially croſſed my path, and by his advice I regulated my future conduct.

"I love—I pity—I will ſerve you," ſaid this diſcreet friend; "obey the commands of your father-in-law—join your regiment immediately—go, beloved De Corſange; leave to me the care of your happineſs—I will find out the retreat of your amiable wife—I will ſee her—I will ſend you news of her—You ſhall even by my contrivance receive letters from each other."

"Oh!"

"Oh!" cried I, tearing my hair, "that curſed renunciation!"

"No matter," replied he, "your tyrants cannot uſe it againſt you—it wants a capital clauſe, without which it is totally inſufficient. I ſhall explain this to you ſome other time; you have not now a moment to loſe—ſet out for Beancon—take as civil a leave as you can of the family—this ſubmiſſion will ſerve our cauſe more than your rage, though it could call down fire on their heads."

Perſuaded of his wiſdom as well as of his friendſhip, I entirely followed his directions, except that, in taking leave of the Count and his ſiſter, I uttered ſome reproaches which flew from my heart to my lips, and would not be reſtrained on their parts; they were treacherouſly calm and deceitfully tender.

. . . . . .

I arrived

I arrived at Beſancon in a ſtate of abſolute diſtraction, which found no remedy in the letter I received on the next day from Dulays. My wife, he told me, was ſhut up in a convent in the *rue du Temple*, and that as yet it was impoſſible for him to ſpeak to her.

This ſacrifice of her liberty, he added, was obtained by the artificial careſſes of Madame d'Anfort, and the fears with which ſhe inſpired her on account of her father's diſpleaſure.

Another letter followed the former, the contents of which were a thouſand times more deadly—Madame d'Anfort had received news from the Iſland of Obéron. Monſieur d'Arceville, unable to ſuſtain his joy on hearing of his daughter's being eſcaped from the hands of her raviſher, had ſunk under it, living long enough to write theſe words, which were

were tranſcribed by Dulays; they were addreſſed to Madame d'Afort.

"I thank you for the death you have given me—I expire—it is joy that kills me—take care of my darling daughter—you will receive the deeds of my whole fortune. I bequeath it to her; but the regulation of all my effects I ſubmit to you, making her dependant on your diſcretion, as I ſhould do on that of a wiſe mother. Adieu! I ſhould die with leſs regret if I might hope that you would one day unite my beloved daughter to your amiable nephew. Adieu! my beſt, my kindeſt friend—receive my eternal adieu!"

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

STILL MORE TERRIBLE TIDINGS.

DULAYS, after having copied what the family conſidered to be the laſt will of Baron d'Arceville, gave my heart another and deeper ſtab, by making this addition to his intelligence: "My dear De Corſange," wrote he, "it will kill you, but you muſt know it—when the Baron mentions to Madame d'Anfort her amiable nephew, he moſt certainly meant to deſire that his lovely daughter might be united to her deliverer: yet

Madame

Madame will not underſtand that he had any body in his thoughts but her favourite Chevalier. Alas! that woman is inveſted with too much power for your ſecurity.—Ah! how ſhall I tell it you—arrangements are already made for a marriage that muſt not take place if it can be prevented. Your brother viſits Arzelia at her convent every day, and comes out of it but too well ſatisfied—ſhe either is not allowed to read your letters and mine, or elſe ſhe does not deign to reply to them. You muſt ſpeak—you muſt reveal your ſecret union—it muſt be ſo—I wait to execute your orders, if you ſhould charge my friendſhip with this commiſſion.

A third letter from Dulays completed my miſery, and ulcerated my heart, as if love, croſſed as mine had been, was not a ſufficient torment: I was to be ſtretched

ſtretched on the rack of jealouſy—the contents of his letter were theſe:

LETTER.

"Dear unfortunate Marquis, all is prepared for the union of d'Anfort and Arzelia; to me it is inconceivable—does ſhe really conſent?—to me it appears impoſſible.—Has ſhe not already entered into bands that are ſacred?—but what ſhall I ſay?—how determine?—She is certainly always ſilent to you and to myſelf—no doubt this puts you to deſpair—yet, after all, I dare not diſſemble—I muſt not, dear friend—I ought to reveal your clandeſtine marriage—I have told you ſo already—no time, I again repeat, is to be loſt—come immediately, or ſend me a commiſſion to act for you."

I loſt

I loſt my eyeſight in reading to the concluſion of this fatal letter; but ſtaggering to reach the bell I rang it ſo furiouſly, that my ſervant ran in terrified out of his ſenſes, and ſeeing me in the moſt deplorable condition, reſpectfully inquired what was the matter. I told him I had not ſlept all night—that I wanted air, and ordered, as well as I could ſpeak, my chaiſe to be got ready. You will ſee what were my intentions—I had no doubt but that my wife was unfaithful, and I had made up my mind to ſet off directly for Paris, there to lay my caſe before the tribunal, and to confeſs that I had been the huſband of Arzelia more than nine months.

Having a little recovered from my firſt conflicts, I ſaw the neceſſity of having the conſent of my commanding officer to the abſenting myſelf from the regiment—I went to his houſe for the purpoſe

purpoſe of obtaining it, but he was out, and not expected home till evening—all that day I kept my carriage waiting, and walked with the utmoſt impatience within ſight of the Colonel's door, watching eagerly for his return.

And now a ſingular adventure happened, which at once cured me of all my fears, of all my jealouſy—hear it my friends—I am ſure it is not what you are prepared to expect.

It was eight o'clock, and I was going home, deſperately reſolved to ſet out without leave; when within a few paces of my own lodgings I met a woman, who firſt ſtruck me by the extreme indigence of her dreſs and appearance.

"Monſieur," ſaid ſhe, in a feeble voice, "give me ſomething for the love of God."

All

All my feelings of humanity were engroſſed by my own ſufferings, I therefore ſaid, for the ſake of Heaven, leave me to myſelf; there is nobody on earth ſo miſerable as I am.

She grew more importunate, and I repulſed her with more ill-humour than before.

"Well then," cried ſhe, "if you ſend me away, to be ſure I muſt go, but you will repent of your cruelty."

I was turned from her, but the voice in which ſhe uttered her laſt words would have made me fall to the ground, if Arzelia, my adorable Arzelia, had not ſupported me in her arms.

"You know me now," ſaid ſhe, "but ſay not a word—I may be obſerved."

"Yes,

"Yes, one word," ſtammered I, "are you faith—?"

"Judge by my diſguiſe," replied ſhe, in the tones of offended innocence, "and by the riſk I run in uniting myſelf to you."

"O God!" cried I, ſupporting my fainting frame on her arm as we entered my houſe together; "O God! this tranſport is too great a revolution—I am not able to live under it."

When it was poſſible that we could ſpeak and liſten to each other, I learned all the horrors to which, for my ſake, ſhe had been expoſed—a recital of them are neceſſary, if they do not take up too much of your attention.

Forced by the advice and threats of Madame d'Anfort, I followed her to the convent, where ſhe left me, giving orders

ders to the lady abbeſs not to allow that any body ſhould converſe with me.—The next day ſhe came to ſee me again, and repeated her viſits every ſubſequent day.

"I wiſh," ſaid Arzelia, "you had been a witneſs to our converſations, you would then have underſtood the pains ſhe took to paint the Chevalier in the glowing colours of perfection, and to repreſent you in thoſe the moſt odious."

"My dear," would ſhe ſay, "Corſange can never marry you—he has legally renounced marriage, and if he perjures himſelf he forfeits an immenſe fortune. I hope you will not be his ruin. D'Anfort is a fine youth of eighteen, well made, and handſome, with a heart and mind equally excellent."

"Theſe ſort of diſcourſes," continued my wife, "were always ſure to rouſe my

my indignation. But I was too much afraid ſhe would diſcover our ſecret, had I given her a deciſive anſwer. My ſilence made her believe ſhe had conquered my heart for her darling nephew, and when ſhe informed me of my father's death, ſhe dwelt chiefly on that part of his letter in which ſhe told me he had commanded her to give my hand to the Chevalier.

"After this ſhe brought him with her to the convent, and both of them were ſo aſſiduous, ſo intruding, that I had ſcarcely time to read your letters, which I durſt not anſwer for fear I might truſt my confidence in thoſe who might betray me. The perſon ſent by M. Dulays might have taken a bribe, and we might have been undone.

"I had alſo another motive to work cautiouſly with my tyrants—Dear huſband, I am pregnant!—I expect every minute

minute to bring to light the precious pledge of our affection, and it is that circumſtance that made me eſcape from my perſon to meet you here. Oh! it was a bold expedient, but it has proved ſucceſsful.

Thus it was that ſhe had preſerved our ſecret, and eſcaped from her confinement.

But ah! how complete was the fulneſs of my joy, when I underſtood for the firſt time that ſhe was in a ſituation very ſoon to make me a father; after which ſhe pleaſantly informed me by what means ſhe had accompliſhed her eſcape, and thus it was:

"But no, my dear Arzelia," ſaid the Marquis, ſtopping himſelf, "I am weary with ſo much talking—I call on you to give me a few moments relief, by help-

ing me out with as much as concerns your getting away from the convent."

The Marchioneſs, who ſat embracing the hands of her beloved William, and her almoſt equally beloved Marienna, thus entreated by a huſband ſtill dearer than either, gave a ſmiling aſſent to his petition, and with the moſt graceful air in the world ſoon drew that attention which was before divided wholly upon herſelf.

Know, my good friends, ſaid ſhe, that an unfortunate old woman, one of Poverty's moſt helpleſs children, who often came to aſk charity of the religious, for ſome cauſe or other attached herſelf to me in a very extraordinary manner—her ſenſe and her converſation afforded me all the amuſement of which I was capable. I confeſſed this to Madame d'Anfort, who being well pleaſed

pleaſed with the civility of my behaviour to her favourite nephew, only laughed at the fancy I had taken for the old woman, but laid no reſtraint on my ſeeing her, ſo that ſhe was uſed to paſs whole days in my apartment without inquiſitive moleſtation.

On this poor woman I caſt my eyes for the ſucceſs of a very hazardous undertaking—I ventured to tell her my ſituation—I ſaw ſhe took in it an intereſt truly affectionate, and at my requeſt ſhe procured me a habit exactly like her own, even to the many coloured pieces with which it was patched all over; as I feared my kind friend would be made to ſuffer for her complaiſance after I was gone, I therefore bid her go out before; and when from my window I ſaw ſhe was far enough advanced in the ſtreet, I began to think of my own ſafety; ſhe came in, and went out ſo

often, that the ſervants were well accuſtomed to her ſteps, and when I thought they might have forgot how lately it was that ſhe paſſed by them, I drew the hood over my face, and went clattering along in my wooden ſhoes, making a low courteſy as I hobbled by the porter, who ſaid, with a loud laugh—

"Well, where are you fidgetting now, mother, and by which way did you come back?"

I did not ſtay to make my reſponſes, but walking at firſt, and running afterwards, I ſoon reached the houſe from whence the coaches ſet off. I would have taken a place to Beſancon; but the maſter, who formed from my appearance no very reſpectable opinion of my abilities, was going to ſay he could not accommodate me, if, foreſeeing what were his intentions, I had not ſilenced his ſcruples

ſcruples by making ſome gold glitter before his eyes; they were inſtantly withdrawn from my dreſs, and fixed on my purſe; the coach was fortunately ready —I ſtepped into it—our journey was ſoon completed, and——but I have done, and muſt reſign the hiſtory of two perſecuted lovers into the hands of a much more able narrator.

Every body thanked the Marchioneſs for her condeſcenſion, and the Marquis, kiſſing her hand, reaſſumed the thread of his intereſting recital.

We agreed to remain the night of our re-union at my lodgings, but to take others the next morning in an obſcure part of the town, where we might be leſs liable to diſcovery.

We had been ſome hours aſleep, when ſuddenly we were awakened by

theſe words: "Save yourſelves, unfortunate pair, the Count and his ſon are treading cloſe on my ſteps."

My God, what a viſion!—it was the viſion of Dulays—it was himſelf—but he had vaniſhed on perceiving that we heard him diſtinctly.—What a moment! the ſcreams of my Arzelia, the cries of an infant!—Oh! I never, never ſhall forget it—yes, at this inſtant of diſtreſs I found myſelf a father—the voices I ſeemed to hear crying "Where are they?—in what place are they concealed?"—left me no time for conſideration; I caught the babe in my arms to ſave his life by flight—I was without light, and almoſt without ſenſes, when as I opened the door a man ſnatched it from my graſp—I groped along my way, I overtook him at the head of the ſtairs, and plunging my ſword in his body, crying out, "Die, deteſtable Anfort, die with thy

thy ſins unrepented." But as I ſtooped to recover my new-born ſon, the voice of Dulays pierced my ſoul.

"You kill," ſaid he, "the friend who would have ſaved you."

I ſhould that moment have fallen on my own ſword, if he had not exerted his little remaining ſtrength to ſave me feeling the ſword drawn from his body, and hearing me mutter that his blood ſhould not flow unrevenged.

Lights now appeared, and with them the Count and the Chevalier—their fury ſeemed to abate at the dreadful ſcene that preſented itſelf—their own, and all the houſehold domeſtics were preſently employed; ſome of them carried the wounded Dulays to lay him on a bed, others ran for ſurgeons, ſome were ſet to watch that I did myſelf no miſchief;

but breaking from them with the ſtrength of a tyger, I followed the two Anforts to my wife's apartment, whither they had already conveyed my infant. I ſaw it ſtretched by her ſide, and I ſaw her lying without ſenſe or motion.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A PROPOSAL.

I Left Arzelia in the hands of ſome women who were endeavouring to recover her, and turning with fury to the Chevalier, aſked him in a voice of thunder, "How he dared to intrude himſelf into the apartment of my wife?" He hung down his head and made no anſwer—not ſo his father.

"Wretched young man," ſaid he, "are you not ſatisfied to have murdered

your friend; would you be the butcher of my ſon alſo?—Forget firſt thy obligations to me, and expunge from my heart that blood which flows in his veins, mingled with the blood of thy own mother."

I ſhuddered, and I wept.—"Theſe tears ſpeak for thee," continued the Count; "give up to my care the fruit of an illegitimate union, and I will pardon all your faults."

My rage rekindled at ſo black a propoſition, nor did I try to reſtrain it.

"You!" cried I; "give my ſon to your care—you, who would have killed his mother—you, who would render its birth infamous—periſh the father, who would make ſuch a ſacrifice!"

The Count ſtill perſiſted, but finding me

me immovable, he withdrew out of the chamber, taking his ſon with him.

I had ſoon the double felicity of ſeeing my wife perfectly reſtored to her ſenſes, receiving my attentions with ſmiles, folding the pledge of our love with rapture to her boſom, and hearing that the wound I had given Dulays was not mortal, even attended with little danger. Of this fatal miſtake I did not acquaint Arzelia, that her mind might not be ruffled, and her recovery retarded. I ſpent my nights as well as days in nurſing theſe deareſt objects of my affection, and Dulays had the goodneſs to pardon what he would never permit me to call by a more ſevere name than that of an error.

The Count and Chevalier remained at an inn, but avoided our preſence. We gave our infant the name of William, and my enchanting wife nurſed

him tenderly at her boſom till Dulays was well enough recovered to go out by ſtealth to have him formally baptized, and procure for him a truſty nurſe, with whom we might ſafely confide him till it ſhould be determined if we were to live together, which muſt depend on the legality of our marriage; the Count ſtill declaring it was in his power to ſet it aſide.

Dulays having carried our ſon to Paris, I did not refuſe to ſee the Count, who ſent to deſire an interview with me, and as he entered my chamber he firſt held out his hand, then very affectionately embraced me; this kindneſs quite overcame me, for I always dreaded his anger from that habit of love I had imbibed for him in infancy.

"How happy I am," ſaid he, forcing me to ſet down by him, "that this terrible tempeſt is ſucceeded by a calm—

hear

hear what I have to ſay, and do not interrupt me."

I aſſured him I would be all attention, and he proceeded.

"I am arrived at that age when ambition is pardonable, becauſe it is the only paſſion that can be rationally indulged. Well, then, I am ambitious, but it is for the moſt amiable of ſons, in the advancement of whoſe fortunes the whole of my deſires are bounded. It is only your brother that is more dear to me than yourſelf. If you loved each other, my children, you would crown my old age with felicity. O give me this felicity, my dear, my ſecond ſon, and my ſoul ſhall bleſs thee."

"Reſpectable man," I replied, greatly moved, "there is nothing I deſire ſo much; but what is the ſacrifice you would demand?"

"If,"

"If," returned he, "you love Arzelia, you will not think it a hard one; you are not to learn that the marriage you have contracted is illegal, and that it depends only on me to annul it; I would avoid this extremity, if you do not force me upon it. No, dear Corſange, live bleſſed with your Arzelia—I do not ſeek to ſeparate you—but in juſtice your child muſt not inherit the fortunes to which his birth gives him no right. Conſign him to me; I will bring him up with the care of a true father, only that he muſt for ever remain ignorant of his birth or parents."

I opened my eyes wide, but the Count did not direct his to my countenance, or I am ſure its expreſſion muſt have diſpleaſed him. "By giving up this ſmall point," ſaid he, "you will inſure the poſſeſſion of your wife, and I ſolemnly engage on theſe terms never to

to claim under the deed I have in my poſſeſſion—conſent then, my ſon, to your own and Arzelia's happineſs, rather than involve her, yourſelf, and your ſon, in ruin that muſt be inevitable. I neither deſire to ſeparate you nor her from your child; you may ſee him every day if you pleaſe; my ſole condition is only that you never ſhall acknowledge him."

The ſubtilty of this propriety ſtruck me forcibly; but inſtead of reſiſting his arguments, I determined to repel his arts with ſubterfuge equal to his own; ſo pretending to be charmed with his clemency, anſwering at the ſame time for Arzelia's ſubmiſſion to terms ſo lenient, I promiſed to put our infant under his parental care as ſoon as we ſhould arrive at Paris.

By this means we were all ſatisfied—my wife and I having a thouſand plans

to

to ſteal him away from his dangerous protectors without being ſuſpected, and guarding his precious life as well as our own ſecret. But alas! what became of our flattering proſpects, when we heard on our entering Paris that Dulays, the beſt and deareſt of friends, was no more; he had made this journey too ſoon, his wound had opened afreſh, and almoſt inſtant death was the dreadful conſequence.

The eyes of this affectionate friend were cloſed by his mother, who was no longer at his houſe, in which their only remained one ſervant, who put into my hands a letter, ſaying he was charged to deliver it by his maſter in his laſt moments privately, whenever I ſhould come to inquire after him.

" I cannot recal the contents of this poſthumous letter," continued the Count, " without feeling myſelf the murderer of

of the generous compoſitor. Oh, with what nobleneſs did he acquit me of his death—he would allow me no blame—he laid it all upon accident.—In regard to my ſon, he wrote thus:

'I was taken ill on the journey—I 'knew I ſhould die—I turned into 'Vitry, and left your ſon in the great 'ſtreet, at the houſe of Magdeline 'Voiſin, who has undertaken the charge 'of nurſing him—at the church of that 'place you will alſo find the regiſter of 'his baptiſm; you muſt bring him up 'with the utmoſt ſecrecy; make your 'tyrants believe that he is already dead, 'or aſſure yourſelf he will die by their 'hands.'

"As ſoon as I had read the dear Dulays' letter, I ran home in an agony not to be deſcribed; the firſt perſon I fortunately encountered was the tender mother of our infant, whoſe joy at finding her

her child was properly diſpoſed of, mellowed the affectionate; ſhe as well as I felt for the fate of its generous protector."

We conſulted together on the wiſe advice he had given, and no opportunity ſeemed ſo convenient as the preſent effectual to impoſe on the deſigning family, with whom we were ſtill forced to live. We ran to them weeping and diſordered, to declare the death of Dulays and our infant—our tears, which were flowing in torrents for our friend—our lamentations—our refuſing to be comforted—every thing contributed to expel from their cautious minds the very idea of impoſition—even the Chevalier was ſatisfied, and had the hypocriſy to join his conſolations with thoſe of the Count and Madame d'Anfort; for a long time we ſuffered them to be all equally ineffectual, but at laſt pretended to

to be more reconciled to our inevitable misfortune.

This conduct of ours ſo much delighted them, that we did not live very uncomfortable for more than twelve months; and what added to their good humour, was there being no appearance of an increaſe to our family—in all this time we had never once looked in upon our ſtolen treaſure for fear of creating ſuſpicion; but the caution we painfully practiſed was traverſed by a very ſimple accident, which I am going to relate.

I was walking one day with the Count and his ſon in the court of the Hotel, when a milkwoman, who was going to the kitchen, made a full ſtop, and looking at me, cried out—

"O bleſſed Virgin, you muſt certainly be the father of that child who reſembles

bles you ſo ſtrongly; for my part I never ſaw the like of it."

I felt my heart ſicken—I would have hurried them away—but the Chevalier exclaimed, "What is it you ſay, my good woman?"

"I ſays," replied ſhe, with the ſame naiveté as before, "I ſays, Monſieur Seigneur, that gentleman," pointing to me, "muſt ſurely be papa to a pretty little boy called William, who is nurſed by a friend of my own; but I beg a great many pardons for making free with ſuch noble perſonages." She courteſied, and went into the houſe.

"The woman is mad," cried I, pierced to the ſoul.

"Perhaps not," replied the Chevalier, who ſtood exchanging glances with his father—but come, Sir," taking him by

by the arm, "let us wiſh the Marquis a pleaſant walk, whilſt you go and repoſe yourſelf."

I made no doubt they were going to bring the woman under a more ſtrict examination—mad with apprehenſion I ran to the ſtable, put a ſaddle upon the horſe, which I knew to have the moſt ſpeed, gallopped, without ſtopping, till in Vitry, and at the very door of my child's nurſe.

It was fortunately open—ſhe ſtood before it with my William in her arms.

"How came you by that infant?" cried I.

"Monſieur Dulays brought it to me—its name is William—he told me it belonged to one of his friends, and you may ſee by his beauty that he has not wanted good nurſing."

"It

"It is a charming child indeed," replied I; "pray lift it to my ſaddle, that I might take a nearer view of it."

All this time I held my purſe in my hand, and as ſoon as ſhe had placed the child before me, I let it drop at her feet, ſetting off with my prize, at a rate that outſtripped the winds.

My little charge, frightened and fatigued, gave ſo many proofs of his objections to this mode of travelling, that I was under the neceſſity to diſmount near the royal gardens, into which I entered not only to appeaſe his cries, but to conſider how I ſhould beſtow him hereafter.

I carried him to the ſmall wood, than which nothing can be more ſequeſtered; here I ſat down with him upon the graſs, and as I preſſed him to my heart, bedewing his face with my tears, an elderly

elderly woman, who, unobſerved by me, had been watching all my motions, advanced towards me, and with much mildneſs aſked me ſome queſtions, of which humanity was evidently the prompter; the moment I heard her ſpeak, ſhe impreſſed me with a ſort of ſentiment bordering on veneration.

"Alas!" ſaid ſhe, "my dear Monſieur, are you the father of this lovely infant?"

"Yes! Madame."

"What a beautiful creature—but you weep—have you encountered ſome ſiniſter accident?"

"Oh! indeed—indeed I have."

"Well, but it muſt be ſome conſolation to know that you are not the moſt

moſt unfortunate perſon in the world—you cannot be half ſo unhappy as myſelf; but may I not know the nature of your troubles—I beg pardon—I was once a mother, and ſhould be ſo at this moment, if death had not ſnatched from me the moſt amiable of ſons—ah! let my tears flow for a moment, and then I will endeavour to dry yours."

"Madame, my woes muſt be ſecret."

"O you may ſafely truſt them with me—I am a ſtranger in this country—I have been here only two months, and who can tell that I may not be able to render you ſome ſervice—I am alone—I have neither huſband nor children—I am abſolutely quite ſolitary, without acquaintance, and without wiſhing to have any—ſpeak, my dear Monſieur, ſpeak, I entreat you—I am concerned for

for you—I feel a very ſingular concern in your misfortunes."

"Generous ſtranger! what could you do to relieve me?"

"Whatever lies in my power, I am ready to perform."

"Ah! would you but ſave this child from thoſe cruel wretches who will raviſh him from his father—who will raviſh him from you—ambition the covetouſneſs of a brother."

"I underſtand you—yes, I will—I will—what a pity—this child, I ſuppoſe, is your natural ſon?"

"Oh, no! oh, not—but the deareſt offspring of a lawful union—but that innocent union is croſſed by unfeeling relations."

"What then—it is a clandeſtine marriage?"

"Yes, and that is the only fault of its miſerable parents."

"Ah! Monſieur, a fatal error it ſurely is, but it ſhould not be puniſhed with death—give me the dear child—I will be its mother—I will bring it up as my own.—Poor innocent babe, it puts me in mind of my ſon when he was at that age—pray was it born in Paris?"

"No, Madame, in Beſancon."

"Good God! Beſancon! O Heavens! did you live there when my ſon—— cruel remembrance—was alſo alive, and in that horrible town——did you know my ſon?—he was ſweet, amiable, and generous—but, alas! he was barbarouſly murdered."

"Murdered?"

"Murdered?"

"Yes, by a fellow-collegian."

"What was his name?"

"Dulays—ah! tell me, did you know him?"

"A little, Madame."

"Have you heard of his fate?"

"O yes—and never, never ſhall eraſe it from my memory."

"Then you can give me a detail of the particulars?"

"Madame, I beg—in pity excuſe me."

"Theſe were the ſelf ſame words he told me when he expired in my arms—

he was, he ſaid, at Beſancon, to render ſome ſervice to a certain Marquis de Corſange, whom he many times had mentioned to me in his letters, a giddy-headed young nobleman, with whom he had got acquainted at college, began a quarrel with him, and run his ſword through his body—is not that the real account?"

"It is much like it."

"My ſon added, that he would have bled to death of his wounds, had it not been for the Marquis de Corſange, whom he always deſcribed as a good-natured and humane young nobleman. Ah! Heavens, what do you bring to my remembrance?"

This converſation, my friends, overwhelmed me with ſhame and confuſion—to claim the ſupport of a woman who is the mother of the friend I have immolated

lated—the mother of the friend whoſe proceedings were moſt generous—far from denouncing my guilt to his family, he had that grandeur of ſpirit to mention my name only to be my eulogium. O God! I was then in one of thoſe indeſcribable ſituations which can only be felt.

Madame Dulays, ſeeing me turn pale, aſked me the reaſon of my confuſion—I anſwered her that I was that Marquis de Corſange whom her ſon had ſo advantageouſly pourtrayed in his letters—ſhe expreſſed the joy ſhe felt at ſeeing me, invited me to ſtep into her carriage, and begged for an account of my adventures, promiſing to take every maternal care of my ſon from that night.

The ſting of remorſe was going to make me commit an indiſcretion, but after mature deliberation I began to think better. I would therefore not

undeceive Madame Dulays, as ſuch an avowal would not only have kindled her wrath and indignation, but hindered her from undertaking to conduct my ſon's education — ſuch a diſſimulation laid, however, hard upon my feelings.

After having related the ſtory of my misfortunes, and entreated her to take every care of my William, but, above all, to conceal from him his real parents, ſhe promiſed every thing, aſſured me of her friendſhip, and an implicit obſervance of my injunctions.

Think you this converſation did not cover me with confuſion. It involved me in agony hardly to be concealed— the exceſs of my remorſe was almoſt inſupportable—I ſhould have ſunk under it, but I had need of Madame Dulays' aſſiſtance to take care of my boy; and without knowing me for the deſtroyer of her own, already ſhe had granted it,

it, under all the ſecrecy my ſituation, made it neceſſary for me to exact for the preſervation of a life ſo precious to myſelf and its mother. O what joy! what rapture did I experience when, Madame Dulays bore him from me, hiding him under her cloak till ſhe had conveyed him to her carriage, when mounting my horſe, I again proceeded towards Paris.

CHAP. VI.

THE SEPARATION.

THE Hotel d'Anfort I found in the greateſt confuſion—the Chevalier, my inveterate enemy, juſt arrived from Vitry; he had threatened the good woman, who had been entruſted with my child, in ſuch a manner as made her confeſs the whole affair.

He heard that a few minutes before his arrival I had taken away the boy, but was ignorant of the place to which I had

I had conducted him: having therefore held a council with his father and aunt, they unanimouſly reſolved that Madame d'Anfort ſhould conduct Arzelia to a chateau ſhe had ſituated in the environs of St. Germain, and there kept till I ſhould have delivered up my ſon, that helpleſs object of their common hatred and purſuits.

I am not informed of this new diſaſter till they have carried off my wife: however, Arzelia finds means to ſend ſecretly a ſhort note to me, in which ſhe hints that it is time for us to free ourſelves from the control of our tyrants—ſhe alſo ſends me a gold repeater, which ſhe begs me to look at every hour that I may remember her.

I believe, continued the Marquis de Corſange, here is no one preſent who has not heard of the adventures of my poor William whilſt he was at col-

lege, as well as after he left it. Dumount was a ſtranger to me, when I committed to him the care of his education—nor did I ever reveal myſelf to him; but you muſt recollect, my dear friend, my firſt interview with my ſon. Great God! how pathetic it was—then I gave him that watch which had been the gift of his mother, but the motto I firſt tried to efface, fearful even that ſhadows may be the means of betraying our ſecret. But to continue my narrative properly, I muſt return to the impriſonment of the beloved Arzelia. You will perceive how much we were intimidated, and it is more than poſſible I may be too juſtly accuſed of acting with ſupineneſs in an affair of ſo much importance; and the only excuſe I am able to plead againſt this charge is, that it was only the conſideration of the ſafety of our boy's life, as well as for my wife's reputation—the having exacted from me an oath, adminiſtered with all

all awful ſolemnity, never even in the greateſt emergency to have recourſe to the laws for redreſs of our grievances, but to wait patiently until Providence ſhould lead us out of our difficulties.

Ah! it was madneſs in us to the higheſt degree—why ſhould we not have had courage to ſhake off the chains in which our three cruel tyrants held us fettered—indeed, I believe it was chiefly in the fear of our marriage being diſſolved that I was kept back; and the deed of renunciation which I had ſigned, and of whoſe invalidity we were not yet perfectly convinced, they having bid us ſo much defiance, that we even dared not to conſult a lawyer, for fear of making ourſelves liable to a law-ſuit, whoſe final iſſue we conſidered as very fatal.

Thus was I forced to bear this ſeparation without making the leaſt complaint; but I at laſt found means, by the

adroitneſs and ſuggeſtion of my good Madame Dulays, to inform my beloved wife that our William was ſafe.

At night, when every body was ſafely retired to reſt in the hotel, I mounted my horſe, and fled to the houſe which contained my treaſure; it was a ſhort diſtance from St. Germain; a long avenue of trees conducted to its entrance, and was covered with gravel—I contrived to trace in large characters upon the gravel the word *well.* I ſet out immediately after, reached the hotel before day-break, and retired to my own apartment, fearing to incur any ſuſpicion.

Every morning Arzelia left the chateau, under the pretext of recruiting her ſpirits by the air—ſhe choſe for her walk the avenue, alledging, that ſhe liked it better than the park—there ſhe read

read what I had written over night, and ſometimes made uſe of the ſame expedient to let me know her thoughts—it was utterly impoſſible for her to write, or indeed, had ſhe been furniſhed with the means to do ſo, ſhe could not have conveyed her letter, becauſe Madame d'Anfort never for a moment left her but during thoſe walks which ſhe permitted her to take.

Thus we continued to exiſt, for one could not call it living, till the moment when I ſent my ſon to the college of Navarre, where I put him under your care.—My worthy Dumount, I ſaw you, your phyſiognomy announced an amiable heart, and it did not deceive me—it was about that time that affairs took a different turn at the chateau d'Anfort.

Madame d'Anfort, who could not conceive how I could live, parted from my Arzelia, without beholding, nay even

even without enquiring after her, for of courſe ſhe was ignorant of my nocturnal excurſions, began to let her enjoy more liberty; ſhe changed her lodging room, and aſſigned another for her uſe more cheerful and pleaſant—it was in the front of the firſt court-yard, but quite adjoining to that in which ſhe ſlept: this made my beloved invent a ſcheme of receiving me by night unknown to every body; it was a very bold ſtratagem, and, as we were happy enough to make it ſucceed, it was a very ludicrous one: ſhe conveyed it to me thus—one morning that I was riding round the walls of the chateau in which my wife was confined, which I conſtantly uſed to do a hundred times at thoſe hours when I ran no riſk of being ſpied, I approached the windows of the room without knowing that it contained her—the ſhutters were yet cloſed, but an unaccountable preſentiment, for which I could in no way account, detained me under it for

ſome

ſome time; at length the ſhutters were opened, and I was bleſſed with a ſight of my Arzelia, whoſe white hand thruſt out a paper, and then inſtantly diſappeared. I ſprung forward, caught it up—O Heavens and earth! it was the writing of my wife—but before I could break the ſeal, I had wetted it through with my tears, and devoured it with my kiſſes—ah! how tranſporting were its contents—ſhe pointed out to me a method by which I might gain admittance to her, when her guards were ſleeping—it was thus we accompliſhed it:

Madame d'Anfort uſed to ſend every day to St. Germain a large covered cart, loaden with all the productions of her garden, and a ſimple harmleſs boy acted as driver, and afterwards ſold them in the market-place, and at night returned to the chateau about twelve. It occurred to us to make uſe of this lad, and to procure ourſelves, without his

his knowledge, the pleaſure of converſing with each other; and for that end it was we concerted theſe meaſures.

Champaign, my valet, by my orders diſguiſed himſelf one day in the habit of a country man—he knew the inn at St. Germain where James put up every evening; thither he repaired, and entering into converſation, propoſes to drink together; they then readily agreed to the propoſal, but towards midnight he wanted to return.

"I will accompany you," anſwers Champaign, "for, late as it now is, I have to go a league beyond your houſe."

While they were on the way the clown left the cart about a hundred yards behind him — Champaign then wiſhed his companion a good night.

"Shall

"Shall you return this way in the morning?" aſked he.

"Yes, at four."

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Why then," ſaid he, "we will go together to my lady's great kitchen garden, it is not a quarter of a league from here. I drive my cart there every morning, when I aſſiſt the gardener, and in the evening I carry the things to St. Germain, where I have many good cuſtomers."

"Well," ſaid my ſervant, "if that is the caſe, we ſhall, my honeſt fellow, meet often, becauſe I come this road every day."

He then parted with the man, and I got into the cart, which was conducted by

by the driver into the court of the chateau—he unharneſſes his horſes, puts them into the ſtable, and retires to bed—he no ſooner is gone than a woman makes her appearance, and flies towards the cart—it is my Arzelia!—what tranſports did we not enjoy!—we could only talk of our misfortunes, but ſhe rejoiced at the deſtiny of her ſon—ſhe approved of all that I had done, particularly of my having made no ſtir in the world about her confinement.—Never were lovers more happy, or more contented—at three in the morning my Arzelia returned to her room—the carter came back, put to his horſes, and carried me back in the ſame manner in which he had brought me.

Champaign ſtood waiting for him at the gate—mutual civilities paſſed between them, and drinking was ſtill their favourite topic—while they entered an alehouſe detached from the road, I jumped

jumped out of the cart, and ran to a neighbouring inn, where my truſty ſervant ſoon came to join me—we then mounted our horſes, and reached the hotel before ſix.

You will allow that we expoſed ourſelves very much, but we carried on the ſtratagem many years, and our ſtolen interviews grew ſweeter and ſweeter from the good accounts I was able to convey to her, of that one, and only one dear pledge of a fond but unfortunate Hymen.

Many years, however incredible it may ſound, did we continue this undetected intercourſe; and I believe we are both ready to acknowledge that it was very far from being the moſt unhappy we had paſſed ſince our marriage. One morning, as I was juſt ſtolen from this unfaſhionable aſſignation with my own wife, and at that ſilent hour when the eye

eye of obſervation was the leaſt to be dreaded, who ſhould I encounter before I had quitted the path which leads from the chateau to the public road but the odious Chevalier—I hung my head, and turned a little to the left, whilſt he took another road to the right, ſetting up a briſk gallop, which made me hope I had been fortunate enough to eſcape his notice; and what confirmed me in this opinion was, that I continued for ſeveral ſucceeding nights to viſit my wife as quietly and as uninterrupted as before, which could not have been the caſe had he diſcovered me ſo near her reſidence.

Alas! he had diſcovered me, and you muſt now prepare yourſelves for a ſpecies of vengeance, of which none but the Chevalier, together with his colleagues, could have been capable.

The

The honeſt gardener had contracted ſuch an intimacy with Champaign, that he would have been ſorry to have miſſed him a ſingle night; and it was at theſe hours, my William, I laboured for you: an enigma you could not ſolve when I gave you the gold repeater, but which I could not explain, without coming to ſuch illuſtrations as neceſſity required us both to avoid. But in this place, my beloved William, I muſt make a ſhort digreſſion to relate the cataſtrophe which made me ſo barbarous to you, my ſon—it was the inſtrument of my preſent happineſs—you will by it perceive how forcibly the arts of the moſt abandon work upon a feeble heart, which is naturally inclined to ſuſpicion.

Before I enter on my narration, I ought to particularize the events which led to it, events which did not reach my knowledge till long after. One morning

ing the Count d'Anfort, having had a reſtleſs night, roſe early, with an intent to walk about the courts, with which his houſe was ſurrounded; a mere motive of curioſity led him to the ſtables, of which he was much ſurpriſed to find the door open; and ſtill more, when on entering it he found both my horſe and that of my ſervant miſſing.

"What can all this mean," exclaimed he; "is Corſange fled?"

He immediately awakens all his domeſtics, intimidates them by his threats, and from them learns that I leave the hotel every night, and do not return till ſix in the morning.

The Count, who did not want penetration, ſuſpects me of going to St. Germain, and of having apparently found means to gain acceſs to my wife; his indignation is kindled to rage; he calls his ſon,

ſon, and they both mount their horſes, and reach the chateau about ſeven.

They both began to reproach in the moſt bitter manner, as did Madame d'Anfort, though ſhe was ignorant for what; but when their motives were explained to her, ſhe was equally fired with fury, and promiſed them to leave no efforts untried to bring the matter to a diſcovery.

The under gardener had often bragged in the family of his good friend who went with him every night to St. Germain, and treated him with as much wine as he would drink, returning each morning to regale him afreſh.

Madame d'Anfort on being informed of this circumſtance by one of her domeſtics, immediately ſuſpected that this good friend of Joſeph's was no other than myſelf, or one of my ſervants; ſhe therefore

therefore provided him on the enſuing night an eſcort of two tall ſtout men: theſe had orders to ſeize the good friend of her gardener, and bring him before her.

Theſe commands were executed—Champaign was caught, and brought before her, and ſhe knew him in a moment: after many threats, many offers of reward, ſhe drew from the faithleſs valet a full account of our nocturnal interviews — ſhe alſo enquired at what place my ſon was concealed; but on that part of his examination he could give no ſatisfaction, becauſe fortunately it was the only thing I had concealed from him.

Madame d'Anfort, in a tranſport of rage, meditated a cruel revenge with her brother and nephew; and by the help of great bribes, eaſily prevailed on the

the ſordid wretch, my valet, to become her accomplice. O Heavens! why are ſouls ſo baſe to become tools to the criminal manœuvres of the great! who, though they eſcape for a time, are ever ſure of falling ſooner or later victims of their guilt—this was the fate of the unhappy Champaign.

One evening, not in the leaſt ſuſpecting their horrid deſigns, I arrived at St. Germain about the uſual hour, and was very much ſurpriſed at not finding either my ſervant or the gardener of Madame d'Anfort. I inſtantly inquired for them, and was informed they went away about half an hour before my arrival. Amazed at what could make them in ſo much haſte, I walked towards the gate of the chateau, where I ſtood waiting—in about half an hour Champaign came out of the court-yard—"Ah! my lord," ſaid this wretch, "I bring you ſad news."

"Speak inſtantly," cried I, "of what nature?"

"The Marchioneſs, my lord, ſent for me by the gardener—as ſoon as I appeared before her, ſhe cried, 'Go, Champaign, go tell the Marquis that I am heartily tired of the ſlavery in which I am held for his ſake—that I beg of him never again to ſee me, and that for the future I ſhall think no more of one from whom misfortunes force me to part.'

"O Heavens!" cried I, "it is impoſſible thoſe ſhould be the words of Arzelia."

"I wiſh to God it were ſo—but, my ord, to give you a convincing proof, I will ſhew you the preſent ſhe made me, as an acknowledgment, ſhe was pleaſed to ſay, for the trouble I had taken."

"Here,

'Here, my good Champaign,' added ſhe, 'is a purſe containing twenty-five louis-d'ors; rely always on my gratitude, but I requeſt you to have nothing farther to do with this affair; all is over between the Marquis and myſelf, and I am determined it ſhall be for ever.'

I leave you to think what impreſſion this diſcourſe of my ſervants made upon my mind—far, very far was I from ſuſpecting his treachery; and beſides, his report, as to appearance, had too much the tincture of truth for me to call it in queſtion. Grief had nearly deprived me of my ſenſes; I uttered nothing but reproaches and imprecations upon the innocent Arzelia, and returned home with a bleeding heart.

Two days after I received a note by a ſervant of Madame d'Anfort from my wife—it contained theſe words:

"All connection, my lord, muſt for ever ceaſe between us—follow the only advice I can give you, which is to fly from me, at leaſt till Heaven pleaſes to diſpoſe matters more favourably for us than at preſent."

This cold and very laconic letter helped to confirm me in my fatal opinion. I imagined that Arzelia, impatient of the ſlavery of her ſituation, was determined to break her chain, and remove from me—long, very long did theſe cruel ideas haunt my fancy, and I only got rid of them to be involved in others a thouſand times more deplorable.

One morning Champaign accoſted me with a moſt foreboding and diſmal air, ſaying, "Alas! how will your lordſhip be able to ſupport the blow I am going to give you—ſummon all the ſtrength and energy of your ſoul to hear me."

"What

"What blow," cried I; "is it of Arzelia?"

"Ah! my lord, ſhe is faithleſs to your bed."

"Traitor! dareſt thou ſay it?" exclaimed I, maddened by contending paſſions.

"Ah! my lord, your friend Dulays, who is now no more—he it was ſeduced the affections of the Marchioneſs—it was he who diſhonoured you."

"Villain, tremble—your life ſhall anſwer this calumny."

"Ah! my lord, I can prove it but too truly, ſo as to ſtrike you with conviction—the gardener, who I ſee every day, and who is now in our intereſt, found, two days ago in the place where

the Marchioneſs had been ſitting, this picture, and this letter, which he ſaw her preſs ſeveral times to her lips."

Judge of my feeling when I really ſaw the picture of Dulays, and at the bottom theſe words in her own hand writing—*him whom I ſhall never forget!* Gods! what a ray of light ſtruck from the horizon of my underſtanding—I haſtily ſnatched the letter—it came indeed from Dulays himſelf—I knew his hand—this was its contents:

LETTER.

"Take care to conceal the ſecret from every eye—the fruit of a love, the moſt faithful, the moſt ardent, belongs only to me—ah! who more than myſelf has a right to receive this beloved infant. Adieu! I charge you once more that you carefully guard our ſecret intelligence."

You

You will ſuppoſe, my friends, that there could be no poſſible act of inſanity to which I was not now equal—my firſt ſtep was to the Luxemburgh—I ſent for Dumount—you know the cruel orders I gave him, and you have heard of the poverty to which my madneſs reduced them—my wife—my ſon—my Dumount—but I will ſay no more—you have all, all forgiven him, who will never forgive himſelf.

CHAP. VII.

THE MARQUIS CONCLUDES HIS NARRATIVE.

THE moment I had ſent away Dumount, inſtead of going to my own houſe, I made my way to the Count's, where I found the three plotters ſitting together. I fell at the old man's feet—I made the recantation of my errors—I told them I had caſt off the baſtard and his infamous mother for ever—I deſired he would once more receive me under his roof—and to ſo much meanneſs did my

my jealous fury tranſport me, that I caſt myſelf on the boſom of Madame d'Anfort, and even returned the embraces of the accuſed Chevalier.

Permit me now to draw a veil over the thouſand acts of raſhneſs and folly I committed for the next thirteen months; in all which time I did not know, or even care what was become of my wife, or the ſon of Dulays, for whilſt I thought him ſuch I hated him with more energy, if poſſible, than I had loved him when I believed him to be my own; which diſpoſition of mind very well ſatisfied my entertainers, who loaded me with all ſorts of kindneſſes, though I received them with more than inſenſibility.

One day the Count and Chevalier returned together gloomy and agitated.

"We have ſeen him," ſaid the Chevalier to me, with an air of defiance. "We have ſeen the ſon of Dulays."

"Where have you ſeen him?"

"Where! why in the king's garden—he is grown quite a man—but my brother, as he is nothing to you, why allow him to be in Paris, to remind you of your own diſgrace, and the diſhonour of your family?"

"I do not trouble myſelf about where he lives, how he lives, or what becomes of him."

"True; but as he is chriſtened by your name, he may one day diſcover, and force you to acknowledge him for your ſon; at leaſt it is not neceſſary that he ſhould ſtay to blaſt our ſight in Paris; let us all unite in getting him paſſed to the Iſles."

"No

"No, Chevalier! not to the Iſles, never."

"Is this blind tenderneſs for your ſon, Marquis, or for a ſtranger?"

"Suppoſe he ſhould be my ſon?"

"Why then caſt him from your protection, if you have theſe doubts."

"Good God!" cried I, "my mind is made up of incertitudes;" ſaying which I quitted the room.

You may perceive, my friend, I was ever wavering between doubt and certainty—you tremble—you deteſt me.—Well—I deſerve it. This circumſtance of my hiſtory does me no honour—it is my crime—my only crime—happy ſhall I be if my wife and ſon ſhould ever condeſcend—though it is impoſſible they

ſhould forget it, if only in conſideration of my peace, they will never again recal it to my memory.

Theſe were my reflections after I had quitted the Count and Chevalier.

This child, argued I, though the ſon of Dulays, muſt at leaſt have a chance for his life—he ſhall not be made a victim of aſſaſſins! I ſat down and wrote a letter, which I ordered Champaign, my valet, to carry to the college—inſtead of doing as I commanded, being already corrupted by my ſecret foes, he firſt conveyed it to them, who being farther inſtructed by them, went and delivered it to Monſieur Dumount.

You already know, that, owing to the treachery of this ſervant, my ſteps were followed by the Count and Chevalier—but there is ſome myſtery in Madame d'Anfort's receiving, or rather forcing my

my ſon's governor into the carriage, which remains yet to be explained.

I feel no gratification to my vanity in declaring to you, that a paſſion ſhe had ſtrangely imbibed for me was no ſmall cauſe of all our misfortunes—ſhe could not bear my preference of Arzelia; it was therefore more on the ſcore of jealouſy than intereſt that ſhe had for ſo many years held her in confinement; and when at laſt it was diſcovered by the Chevalier that I privately viſited my wife, her rage knew no bounds.

I have obſerved before that Dulays had always been a favourite in the family; and whilſt I was with my regiment, ſhe aſked his picture as that of a friend ſhe much eſteemed. I did not know of this circumſtance till ſhe herſelf confeſſed it, and that having ſome of his writing ſhe forged the letter which envelopped the picture, and gave orders how

how it might be inevitably conveyed into my hands—whatever ſhe commanded they executed, and ſhe heard the ſucceſs of her project with tranſports of joy, which had in them every thing that is evil. She ſaw me taken in her ſnare, and doubted not having confirmed her miſchief, that I ſhould accommodate my paſſions to her own.

Though ſhe had ſo far ſucceeded as to carry me back to their infernal manſion, fear or ſhame ſtill kept her ſilent on the motive for which ſhe had betrayed me—ſhe only let the fondneſs of her conduct ſpeak for her, and this I attributed merely to compaſſion for that extreme dejection which had faſtened on my ſpirits.

Having ſent away my letter, I ordered my chaiſe, that I might meet Dumount and his pupil at Valence. It was to

to ſave the life of the former that I took this ſtep; as to the ſon of Dulays, as I then thought him, it was very indifferent to me what became of him after I had given him a chance of running from his enemies. O God! forgive this inhumanity — alas! were I to repeat what are my ſelf accuſations, I ſhould never, never have done.

It was midnight when I ſtepped into my chaiſe—no ſervant attended, no light followed me, and I had proceeded ſome miles before, by a jolt of the carriage, which threw me a little on one ſide, I diſcovered to my unutterable ſurpriſe, that I was not travelling alone—it was Madame d'Anfort who had taken her poſt at my ſide.

"Do not be terrified," ſaid ſhe, "that for your ſake I riſk every thing which ought to be moſt dear to me—

liſten

liſten to me whilſt I tell you the foundation of my preſent extravagance."

She need not to have commanded ſilence, for aſtoniſhment had effectually ſilenced me.

"You are going," ſaid ſhe, "on a ſecret expedition, as you ſuppoſe; but your ſervant who is gone to the college with your letter has betrayed you to us; we have even ſeen the contents of that letter, which nevertheleſs is forwarded."

I gave a cry of horror.

"I tell you I expect no interruption—hear me out with patience, if you would preſerve more lives than one. My brother and nephew have prepared a trap for you—they are already gone—they will meet you with an exempt at Valence. Arzelia has confeſſed to me that

that the boy, whoſe blood you would ſave, is not yours, but the ſon of Dulays; you ought not to trouble yourſelf any more for his ſafety—but the innocent Dumount is alſo condemned to die—and it is to ſave him that I make myſelf the unbidden companion of your hazardous expedition. If we can get to Valence before the other party, let us ſeparate the old man from his pupil, though we ſhould uſe force to effect his ſafety—conſent to do this, or both muſt fall."

I ſaw nothing but good ſenſe in this advice, and without heſitation determined to follow it; for what ſhe told me of my wife's confeſſion, as to the father of her child, had expelled from my heart every thought but what preſented itſelf in the ſcarlet colour of vengeance.

She

She ſeized on the moment of my acknowledgments to diſcover the ſource of her favours; and can you believe, ſo great was my deſire of a ſingular revenge, I actually did promiſe to make her my wife as ſoon as we ſhould have ſecured the ſafety of my dear Dumount: —this brought her into good humour, and we arrived at Valence in time to execute our plan of ſeizing on Dumount before the Count and Chevalier appeared to oppoſe us: they, on their arrival, furious at not finding us at the inn, followed our tract, and ſoon overtook my carriage.

The exempt of whom Madame d'Anfort had ſpoken attended the Count and Chevalier—I need not ſpeak of the bloody combat that enſued—many fell dead on the earth, in which number the guilty Chevalier was included—but, thank Heaven, he did not fall by my hand. At length my party were overpowered;

powered; the exempt cauſed me to be bound, and put into the carriage with Madame d'Anfort, who, touched with remorſe for the miſchief ſhe had occaſioned, confeſſed to me all that I have before related.

On my arrival in Paris I was ſhut up in a loathſome priſon, and a proceſs commenced againſt me — God only knows how it might have ended, if Arzelia, releaſed by the penitent Madame d'Anfort, had not fallen at the king's feet, and recounted to this good prince all our adventures—he heard her with graciouſneſs, and condeſcended to command that the Count and I ſhould both appear before him. I rejoiced, but the Count mourned at this order—I ſtood before the face of majeſty a deceived man, but not a guilty criminal—the Count hung down his head, even more oppreſſed by ſhame than ſorrow—our awful judge had the goodneſs to hear

hear my juſtification from the beginning to the end, not without looking often—now on Arzelia—now on me—his eyes ſwimming in tears—he was not contented with granting me a general pardon, but ſet aſide my renunciation, legalized my marriage, acknowledged William the heir of my honours, and ordered that as ſoon as he could be diſcovered he ſhould be preſented, that he might confer other favours upon him, independent of thoſe which were his own in right of birth.

The Count, in deſpair at this ſentence, is gone into retirement, together with his ſiſter, who accompanied him, and have never diſturbed us ſince their exile from that world to which their conduct was no ornament—in the mean time it has been our unremitting endeavours to recover our loſt treaſure; but what we could not effect, chance has revealed to us.

Ah!

Ah! my William! my beloved William! now that we have found you, our next wiſh is to unite you, with the conſent of Dorance and Longuville, to your Marianne—your amiable Marianne.

In that moment the young people were at the feet of the Marquis and Marchioneſs, and the ſcene became too pathetic for deſcription.

Longuville had never ceaſed weeping the whole time Monſieur de Corſange was making his recital, and his tears redoubled at the concluſion. Dorance pitied his deſpair—ſaid to him in a voice of kindneſs, Longuville, fear no longer that you will afflict my feelings by indulging the effuſions of Nature—embrace your excellent daughter.

"I cannot—I dare not," he replied, "till you are revenged—it is not your forgiveneſs

forgiveneſs that can acquit me of this obligation; your goodneſs only redoubles my guilt."

He drew out his ſword with a quick motion, and would have plunged it in his heart—Dorance ſnatched it from his hand.

"Stop this raſhneſs," cried he; "commit not a crime for which there is no repentance. Live—give your Marienna to my William, and let their union be the ſeal of our perfect reconciliation.

Still Longuville lifted not his eyes from the ground, and the moſt impenetrable gloom ſettled on his countenance—he ſaw Marienna at his feet—he felt her embracing his knees—he heard her piercing cries—yet all this was incapable of moving him, till Dorance, catching him in his arms, exclaimed—

"O God!

"O God! you muſt either conſent to live with me, or let me die with you."

And now ſee them preſſed to the heart of each other, ſo equally affected, that it was impoſſible to diſcover the innocent from the guilty—the offended from the offender.

"*O divino ſpettacolo,*" cried the Italian, "*O anguſtie delle vicende humane.*"

To dwell longer on this part of our hiſtory would be keeping our readers in the ſhade of melancholy, when in our power to lead them by another way to the very end of it, through the fun-gilt paths of cheerfulneſs—let us then, for ſome time, ſhut up the gates, and draw up the bridge of the forſaken fortreſs, whilſt we go with our now happy party to Paris, promiſing to return hither again

again before we close these wonderful adventures.

On the morning after their arrival at the Hotel de Corsange, the Marquis, with some vanity, and much gratitude, conveyed William in his own carriage to Versailles, and presented him before that monarch, to whom he was indebted for all his felicity.

William, unaccustomed to so much grandeur, trembled in the presence of majesty, and hardly durst lift up his eyes till the king said to him, "You have a very timid air, my young friend; I would always have you modest and gentle, but I also expect that you will love rather than fear me."

This condescending command inspired the youth with a decent courage, and he acquitted himself for the rest of the audience with such graceful dignity, as to

to pleaſe the king ſo well, that he ſent him away colonel of a regiment, and loaded with many other marks of royal favour; yet the full completion of all his wiſhes was reſerved for the next day, when at the foot of the altar he received the hand of his adorable miſtreſs—the good—the virtuous—the beautiful Marienna—but as there muſt be ever ſome alloy to the moſt perfect of mortal bliſs, Longuville, torn by remorſe, and exalted by the honours conferred on his daughter, unable to ſupport theſe oppoſite and contending extremes, fell a ſacrifice to them, expiring on the boſom of the friend he had ſo dreadfully injured, but not till he had ſettled his immenſe fortune on William and his wife, except a handſome proviſion which he made for his adopted ſon, the good Jean Picot, with a large legacy to Signor Carlo.

Dorance regarded the death of Longuville as a ſort of ſummons to himſelf; nor was he miſtaken, for he ſurvived him only a few weeks. William cloſed his eyes—he expired tranquilly, and without terror, making it his laſt requeſt that his remains might be depoſited in the ſubterraneous chapel of the fortreſs, cloſe by the ſide of his wife and her ſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

A SUMMONS UNEXPECTED.

SCARCELY had Dorance rendered up his laſt ſighs, and before Marienna or William could be ſeparated from the clay-cold body of their adopted father, a meſſenger arrived in the greateſt haſte, and deſiring to ſpeak with the Marquis de Corſange, was refuſed admittance on account of the confuſion which then reigned in the family.

The ſtranger replied, that he had a letter of conſequence, which muſt be delivered into the Marquis's own hands.

Still the ſervants refuſed to diſturb their lord, who had given orders not to be broken in upon, but ſaid they would riſk his diſpleaſure by conveying the letter with which he was charged to the Marquis's apartment; and the meſſenger being able to make no better terms, ſubmitted to thoſe he was offered, waiting to receive the Marquis's commands after he ſhould have read his diſpatches.

Monſieur de Corſange ſtarted on ſeeing the well-known characters of Count d'Anfort engraved on the cover, and his ſpirits being already depreſſed, he did not break the ſeal but with fear and trembling; theſe were the contents:

LETTER,

LETTER.

" Loſe not a moment, my dear De Corſange, to beſtow a charitable viſit on the man by whom you have been moſt injured—that man is no longer your implacable enemy—ſet out with the meſſenger I ſend to you, he will conduct you to me—baniſh all ſuſpicion—my eyes are fully open to your merits, and to the true character of that unhappy youth, for whoſe ſake I became your perſecutor—if you would not bring my old age with ſorrow to the grave, waſte not a moment to grant me your pardon, to receive my bleſſing, and to promiſe me your aſſiſtance in a buſineſs which is now neareſt to my heart. Come immediately, I beſeech

you. I hardly know whether to ſubſcribe myſelf your happy, or your miſerable

"D'ANFORT."

If the Marquis's apprehenſions were appeaſed by reading the purport of this billet, his curioſity was alarmed, and all his infantine fondneſs for the writer revived.

He inſtantly ordered his carriage to be made ready, but was informed the meſſenger had come in one of the Count's, which he deſired the Marquis might make uſe of for the greater diſpatch.

He inquired of the guide how far he had to travel, who replied, the diſtance was only ſeven miles.

He

He wrote two lines to let the Marchioneſs know he ſhould return in the evening, without telling her whither he was going—he gave it to a ſervant to put it into her hands when ſhe could prevail on Marienna to leave the apartment of death, for till then he was ſure ſhe would not be viſible.

Having done this, he ſtepped into the Count's chaiſe, and his eſcort mounted on horſeback; beſides whom there was no other attendant, nor did he know the man who conducted him; it was a domeſtic, whoſe face he was not acquainted with, and of whom he did not chooſe to aſk queſtions, leſt, by refuſing to anſwer them, the myſtery might increaſe inſtead of diminiſh.

As the Marquis proceeded on his journey through by-roads he had never ſeen before, rough, unpleaſant, and gloomy, his thoughts, which might na-

turally be ſuppoſed to feel ſome alarm at a circumſtance ſo extraordinary, were, on the contrary, employed in vague ſuppoſitions, on what could be the ſituation of Count d'Anfort, in forming ideas that he ſhould find him on the point of death, and in experiencing the honeſt luxury of adminiſtering conſolation, or ſervices to the man who, for ſo many years, had perſecuted him without ceaſing.

He did not awaken from theſe pleaſing reveries until the chaiſe came within ſight of a large plantation, in the boſom of which appeared a ſmall white building, but ſo effectually concealed by trees, as made it difficult to diſcover whether it was a houſe or a tower. He inquired of his guide, who told him it was the reſidence of Count d'Anſort; indeed they were almoſt at his gates.

His conductor adviſed the Marquis to alight on the ſpot where he had ſtopped

ped the carriage, aſſuring him, that to proceed farther would be attended with ſome difficulties, perhaps danger, the road round being nearly impaſſable, and much longer than ſtriking through the wood. Corſange readily admitted the wiſdom of his counſel, and in ten minutes found himſelf at the door of the chateau.

Before he entered it he deſired his guide to precede him, and announce his arrival to the Count, ſuppoſing him to have been near his diſſolution—what then muſt have been his aſtoniſhment, to be received by the old man, not only with tranſports of pleaſure, but apparently in as good health as he had known him ſix years before.

"Have you found your ſon?" was the firſt queſtion he was able to articulate.

"I have," replied the Marquis, equally agitated.—"Oh, my dear father! I have found in him all to which my fondeſt wiſhes could have aſpired."

"God be praiſed!" cried the venerable Count, tears ſtreaming down his cheeks, whilſt his trembling hand preſſed that of the Marquis, "God be praiſed! and Arzelia!" added he, almoſt ſuffocated by his feelings, "that dear, that perſecuted innocent! is ſhe alive?—is ſhe well?—O God! what crimes does the ſight of you—does the name of Arzelia revive in my memory."

The Marquis, penetrated by his contrition, having forced him to be ſeated, knelt down at his feet, and covered his hands with the dew of ſympathy, aſſuring him, in words often interrupted by extreme emotions, that Arzelia was well, and that he wanted nothing to complete his happineſs now that his reſpectable and

and early protector had reſtored him to his affections.

Being a little recompoſed, the Marquis made inquiries after Madame d'Anfort, and underſtood by her brother that ſhe had retired to a convent, where ſhe had profeſſed, and was a true penitent for all the cruelties ſhe had made him and the Marchioneſs experience.

"But this, my dear Corſange," continued the Count, "is not the ſubject on which I have given you the trouble of coming hither, for ſhe is dead to the world, as well as to me—there is another, and younger object, who not only engages my whole attention, but for whom I mean to ſolicit your protection."

The Marquis eagerly requeſted to be inſtructed by what means he could make

himſelf uſeful, either to him or the perſon for whom he ſeemed to be intereſted.

"I have ſtrange things to tell you," replied the Count; "you muſt liſten to me with patience—a man of your age may explain in ten minutes what will take me up at leaſt an hour—words, though not always a good uſe of them, are too apt to increaſe with our years.

This obſervation was made in a voice, and with an air in which melancholy and ſatisfaction appeared to contend for the pre-eminence.

Before the Marquis would ſuffer the old man to proceed, he had recourſe to a ſtratagem to make him take ſome refreſhment, by aſking a diſh of chocolate for himſelf, which ſucceeded, and he had the pleaſure of conveying another

other to the lips of his aged guardian, whoſe hands had long been reſtrained by the palſy from adminiſtering to his own wants.

"And now, Sir," ſaid the Marquis, "I am all impatience to be honoured with your commands."

The Count looked upon him as if this attention had been the firſt inſtance of that goodneſs of heart which his partiality for the Chevalier would never permit him to contemplate.

"You are an extraordinary creature," ſaid he, "and your virtues are a faithful mirror, in which I clearly behold my own deformities. I thank you—I love to be indebted to you—hear then how much I am going to aſk from your friendſhip? My glaſs," continued he, "has nearly ran out its laſt ſands, and it is on you, Marquis, that I have caſt my

my eyes to fulfil the offices of a father to my heir, when I ſhall ceaſe to protect him."

He rang the bell, and a ſervant coming into the room, the Count only nodded his head, which ſeemed fully to convey his commands, for the domeſtic immediately withdrew.

As to the Marquis, his aſtoniſhment was inconceivable at hearing the Count ſpeak of an heir, knowing that after the death of his ſon there remained no claimant, either for his title or eſtates, having often heard him lament that he had no male relative in the world, which rendered the Chevalier's exiſtence of double importance, and the thought of his having fallen, if not by his hand, at leaſt on his account, ſent a pang to the heart of Corſange, ſuch as repreſented him to himſelf as the moſt cruel of criminals—he did not venture to lift his eyes

eyes towards the parent he had deſpoiled, but caſt them on the ground in ſilent confuſion, until the door opened, and a moſt beautiful young lady made her appearance, leading by the hand a lovely boy about ſeven years old, on whoſe features and countenance were ſtrongly marked his relationſhip to the late Chevalier.

"Behold," ſaid the Count, riſing and preſenting them to the Marquis, "behold, dear and virtuous De Corſange, the widow and the ſon of——."

He ſtopped—he burſt into tears—and waving his hand, the mother retired with her child before the Marquis could form his feelings into any thing like language.

"You have ſeen them," cried the Count, with a ſigh which amounted to a groan, "you have ſeen the relics of all that

that was once undeſervedly dear to me. I do not wonder to ſee you petrified with aſtoniſhment—you had no ſuſpicion any more than I had, that your poor, imprudent, ill-fated brother was a huſband and a father."

"This," cried the Marquis, endeavouring to inſpire the old Count with cheerful ideas, and to turn his thoughts from the gloom of retroſpection, "this is tranſporting intelligence. May God preſerve your valuable life to form the mind and manners of this intereſting infant—may he tranſmit your virtues to poſterity."

The Count ſhook his head—"God has given me a bleſſing," ſaid he, "of which I confeſs myſelf unworthy—it is the beſt return I can make for this great bounty to place him in the hands of an honeſt man, who will perform his duty better than I have done mine—as ſoon as I expire,

expire, you will be called upon to protect both my daughter and my grandſon; till then their ſociety is the only enjoyment of which I ſhall permit myſelf the indulgence; even your viſits, the greateſt to me of all happineſs, is inconſiſtent with the vow of Penitence under which I am bound, and nothing but the ſalvation of thoſe beloved relatives could have made me purchaſe the momentary felicity of beholding you—I muſt ſee you no more—when the ſcene is finally cloſed, information ſhall be given you: and if Arzelia, the dear Arzelia, ſhould join you in the pious work of protecting the fatherleſs and the widow, my ſoul ſhall bleſs her, as it would do the angel of mercy and forgiveneſs."

The Marquis promiſed every thing in the name of the Marchioneſs, and combatted with the Count's reſolution not to admit his future viſits; but finding

ing him, from motives of religion, inflexible on that head, he paſſed the remainder of his ſhort interview in liſtening to the old man's narrative ſince they laſt parted in the preſence of majeſty.

My mind, at that moment, ſaid the Count, bore more the complection of furies devoured by their own torments, than of a rational being, the author of his own misfortunes. My ſiſter was not in a condition to calm my rage, her own being unconquerable.

We left Paris, and for a few weeks travelled from place to place; when having reſtored our minds to ſome degree of compoſure, ſhe ſignified her intentions of retiring to a convent—rage converted into grief is ſullen and diſſatisfied at any intruſion, or having partakers in its unſociable luxury; I therefore

fore uſed no efforts to conquer her reſolution, and having ſeen her received into the convent De ——, I continued my excurſions, never ſleeping two nights in one place, until with my decaying ſtrength my paſſions faded in proportion. I felt it would be impoſſible to ſupport ſo much fatigue at an age ſo advanced, and turned my thoughts towards this houſe, where you now find me—it belonged to one whoſe name I now pronounce with horror—I had purchaſed it for him at his own requeſt eight years ago, but never ſaw it until driven thither by my misfortunes; the ſolitary ſituation pleaſed me; I found only one old female, who ſaid ſhe was placed here to take care of the houſe by ——, ſpare me ſaying by whom.

As ſoon as I was able to take notice of the objects by which I was ſurrounded, I obſerved with ſurpriſe that every thing

thing I ſaw beſpoke a peculiar taſte of neatneſs and elegance, the more ſo as I had heard its miſerable maſter declare he ſhould never put any furniture into it, that he no longer liked it, and ſhould certainly diſpoſe of it whenever he could get a purchaſer to take it off his hands; nor did I know that he had ever been to viſit it ſince it came into his poſſeſſion —but inſtead of the bare walls I was taught to expect, both from the deſcription I had received, and the almoſt dangerous approach to it, every room ſeemed equally calculated for the luxuries as well as the comforts of life—ſtill I ſaw nobody but the old woman, and ſhe was ſo deaf that I ſeldom ſpoke to her—this deplorable ſolitude, with a conſcience infinitely more deplorable, reduced me to the bed of ſickneſs, at which time I hoped to have been releaſed from all my ſorrows; but the goodneſs of God had yet for me a bleſ-

ſing

ſing in reſerve, which has ſweetened the remnant of my days, and at certain moments gladdened my heart with rays of joy—who can look upon ſuch a child as my D'Anfort, and not exult in being the ſtock from whence he is deſcended.

A young woman attended me in my illneſs, whom I ſuppoſed to be a nurſe hired by the houſekeeper for that purpoſe—at firſt I took little, or rather no notice, either of her or the great ſolicitude ſhe diſcovered for every thing that could in the ſmalleſt manner contribute to my recovery. One day as ſhe ſat behind the curtain I heard her ſob—I drew it to ſee what ailed her—ſhe was covered with confuſion, and for the firſt time I remarked the beauty of her perſon, and the grandeur of her air.

When I inquired what it was that afflicted her, ſhe ſaid with extreme modeſty,

deſty, ſhe was ſorry to have diſturbed my repoſe, begged pardon for the liberty ſhe had taken, on a ſuppoſition that I was ſleeping, of giving way to ſome ſad remembrances which at times overpowered her.

"When I am better," ſaid I, "we will talk of your affairs; in the mean time comfort yourſelf, you have been good to me, and ſhall not want a friend."

I again cloſed the curtain, and did not wait to hear what anſwer ſhe would make me.

I grew worſe, and for ſix nights ſhe never quitted my apartment. It was many weeks before I got ſtrength to ſit up, and ſtill her aſſiduities were unremitting.

One

One day that ſhe had aſſiſted me to my chair by the fire-ſide, the door by accident being left half open, I turned my head towards it, at the ſound of an infantine voice crying out "Mama! mama! I ſee you."

She flew to the door, and would have concealed his cherub face which was peeping through it, but I ordered that he ſhould be admitted—ſhe durſt not reſiſt my commands, yet ſhe obeyed them with trembling confuſion—I drew the child between my knees, and we ſoon grew familiar. After our firſt interview I ſaw him every day, and to the fondneſs with which my heart adopted, without knowing him, I attribute, if not my recovery, at leaſt the placidity by which it was very much promoted.

Madame d'Anfort, for no doubt you have already diſcovered that lady in my affectionate nurſe, did not unveil her

ſituation,

ſituation, or give my grandſon to my arms in his true character, until my health was ſo well re-eſtabliſhed as to leave no room to fear the ſhock might cauſe a relapſe—the explanation that enſued is more terrible than I can enter into—let us reſpect the aſhes of the dead, however faulty they may have been—yet let us alſo do juſtice to the living.

Madame d'Anfort is virtuous, reſpectable—the legitimate wife of a man leſs worthy than herſelf of birth equal to his own—the mother of my heir, and the daughter in whom I glory.

Here ended the Count, and the Marquis ſoon after returned to Paris, where he found his amiable domeſtic circle more compoſed and tranquil than when he left them in the morning—the circumſtances of his viſit to the Count, which he minutely related, together with the

the adventure of a grandſon's appearing ſo unexpectedly to comfort his old age, conveyed to all their hearts ſo lively a pleaſure as might have been called joy, if the idea of the good Dorance had not mellowed the expreſſion.

CHAP. IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

HAVING obtained the permiſſion of the Cure de St. Sulpice, the whole of this affectionate ſociety ſorrowfully followed the body of Dorance to ſee it laid at Grenoble in a chapel of that cathedral, there to wait until all ſhould be prepared for its reception at the fortreſs.

As the ſolemn proceſſion moved ſlow and penſively along, the fair face of Marienna,

rienna, like an April morning, conſtantly varied its complection—rain and ſunſhine ſucceeding each other, as often as reflection preſented to her thoughts the cold inanimate corpſe of her foſter father, him to whom ſhe was indebted for more than her exiſtence, travelling to its laſt home—and that ſhe ſhould never again hear the ſound of his voice in the fortreſs, or trace his footſteps on the foreſt—the vivacity of her countenance became obſcured by heavy clouds of regret, which nothing but the warmth beaming from the eyes of William, and his unceaſing attentions could for a moment have diſperſed.

Ah! what an invaluable taliſman does this deity poſſeſs? It is love only that can ſoften ſorrow, or give to felicity its keeneſt ſenſations—convey the beautiful ſwell of tender feelings, of conſcious affection to thoſe eyes whoſe glances would penetrate a rock, or command

an empire—love alone can endow them with ſoftneſs!

It is as difficult for people of conſequence to travel without engaging general obſervation in France as in any other country: the arrival of the Marquis de Corſange, and his party at Grenoble, was ſoon blazed over the whole town—ſome parts of their remarkable adventures had even preceded their appearance, ſo that great multitudes of people flocked round the inn at which they alighted to catch a glance of their perſons; for to be very happy, very miſerable, or very much the ſubject of converſation, whether for your virtues or your vices, is a ſort of invitation to curioſity, which may be extremely incommodious to thoſe who have the misfortune to excite it.

The laſt who got out of the carriage was the happy De Corſange, for well as

as we love the name of William, we think now that he is a huſband, and may be the father of a family—it is high time to give him that more honourable appellation, to which, by his birth, he is decidedly entitled. Yet as habits in ſpeaking, as well as acting, are difficult to eradicate, however we may ſet our faces to conquer them, if hereafter we ſhould inadvertently write William inſtead of Corſange, all readers of ſentiment will forgive the error.

Tenderly as mothers touch the infant of their hopes, and cautiouſly as miſers convey their riches, did Corſange conduct his adorable bride through a concourſe of ſpectators, whoſe admiration, had ſhe been bleſſed with the ſmalleſt portion of modern ſelf-love, and modern aſſurance, muſt have been highly gratifying—but to the daughter of modeſt ſimplicity it gave ſo much unaffected chagrin, that, drawing a long

black veil over her bluſhing face, ſhe walked on with downcaſt eyes, and haſty ſteps, to take ſhelter in the apartment already occupied by the Marquis, Marchioneſs, Carlo, and Jean Picot, where ſhe was received in the protecting arms of her affectionate parents.

Mean time Corſange having lodged his treaſure where he knew it would remain in ſafety, returned back to give orders for proceeding with the body, which himſelf attended with a beating heart and ſtreaming eyes, to ſee it depoſited in the temporary receptacle prepared in the church for its reception—a duty which he choſe ſingly to perform, to ſave from additional diſtreſs thoſe hearts whoſe tranquillity was dearer to him than his own—to do this he foreſtalled, by ſome hours, the time generally appointed for the funeral, which he accompliſhed by ſending a private meſſenger

ger to Grenoble, to get every thing ready for the ſolemn ceremony.

The ſame multitude who had impeded their entrance to the inn followed in torrents to the church; all eyes fixed on the handſome youth, who with filial piety attended the ſad interment. In all nations thoſe hearts being moſt ſuſceptible which are the leaſt adulterated, theſe poor citizens and peaſants did not permit the mourners tears to flow unaccompanied by their own. — We hope our readers will not accuſe Corſange of weakneſs, or think him leſs a hero for beſtowing thoſe marks of grateful humanity which his generous ſoul told him was due to the beſt of friends: to qualify the charge, we would obſerve, that ſenſibility has ſometimes heretofore been in faſhion, and if it ſhould ever again be the *ton*, then, and not till then, will he be the firſt character in modern circles.

Before Corſange went back to the inn, he made a ſhort circle round its environs, to invite the air to kiſs away the traces of that ſorrow which he feared might infect the boſom of his Marienna, ſhould he appear before her with ſwollen eyes. Turning the corner of a ſtreet, he was ſtopped by a man of no very reſpectable appearance.

"Monſieur," ſaid the ſtranger, "if I am not very much miſtaken, your name is William."

"You are not miſtaken, my name is William Corſange."

"If I am right in my conjecture, you acknowledged at College no other than that of William, but if any good fortune has happend to you ſince that time, I beg leave to offer my compliments of congratulation.

Corſange,

Corſange, extremely aſtoniſhed at the freedom of a ſtranger, who ſeemed to know him ſo well, but of whom he did not retain the leaſt recollection, deſired, with a little tincture of his early caution, that he would have the goodneſs to explain himſelf.

"Upon my ſoul," cried this new acquaintance, burſting into a loud laugh, "it is odd enough that you ſhould, from a few caſualties in fortune, which have made you very rich, and me deviliſh poor, forget your firſt friend, the man who gave you the firſt peep into the great world." — Then redoubling his mirth, "My God!" continued he, "I ſhall never forget what a fuſs your old prudiſh governor Dumount made when I forced him to let you go with me to viſit my family; and now we are talking of the old fellow, prithee tell me what is become of him——gone to kingdom come I dare ſay."

Corſange no ſooner by theſe circumſtances diſcovered in this vagabond gentleman his firſt and well beloved friend D'Egeville, than he made up for his reſerve by the moſt affectionate and cordial expreſſions of joy; and ſloven as was his figure, he would have dragged him to the inn, that he might preſent him to his family circle: but D'Egeville ſtrongly oppoſed his intentions, declaring that he was engaged in quite a different party, with whom he muſt proceed immediately towards Paris; that he ſhould be happy to let him a little into his preſent ſituation before they ſeparated, if he would walk up and down the ſtreet where they met for ten minutes, which being agreed to, Corſange opened the confidential *tète-â-tète* by enquiring after the health of the Count and Madame d'Egeville, nor was Mademoiſelle, his ſiſter, forgotten.

"My father and mother," replied he, without encumbering himſelf with any thing

thing like the appearance of feelings " are, like their amiable ſon and daughter, gone to the dogs—both played too high; but which had the greater ſhare in the merit of ſquandering is not yet decided, and will be a bone of contention between them as long as they have the felicity to live under the ſame roof. As to Mademoiſelle, ſhe has taken care of herſelf by eloping with her muſic maſter; and as to me, why, faith, I am juſt what you ſee me, though I have lately met with an adventure that makes up for all the d----d tricks Fortune has played me—yes, William, though I have not a ſhilling in my purſe, I have under my protection the divineſt creature!—oh! if you could but behold her, which my jealouſy will not permit, you would ſay, that, of all mankind, it is I only who am worthy of envy."

Corſange hardly knew whether to laugh or look grave at this ridiculous rhapſody,

rhapſody, but offered his purſe, which was well repleniſhed, and it changed maſters without ſcarcely interrupting the volubility of the thoughtleſs vagabond: he only obſerved, that by this lucky ſupply he ſhould be able to convey his angel to Paris in a ſtile more ſuitable to her beauty, than tramping the whole way on the fineſt feet in the world.

Seeing there was no poſſibility of changing the depravity of his mind or manners, and too delicate to break off abruptly from the man he had juſt laid under no ſmall obligation, Corſange aſked by what adventure he had picked up his travelling companion?

"Why you muſt know," ſaid he, "that I have been wandering far and near in purſuit of that blind jade Fortune, and not finding her in my rounds, ſtarvation forced me to borrow a ſmall ſum in the town of St. Marcellin without

out the owner's conſent, for which honeſt freedom I had the extreme good luck to be ſhut up in the caſtle; the governeſs of which, the great captain's captain, taking a fancy to my perſon, not only ſet me at liberty, but ſwore herſelf my ſlave; and it is even this lovely kind creature who I am now conducting to Paris."

Corſange no longer experienced any thing like friendſhip for a wretch who made no ſcruple to confeſs that he had forfeited all pretenſions, by an act of theft, to the character of a gentleman; yet a ſentiment of pity, not yet totally extinguiſhed, made him ſay, "I hope you do not expect my approbation of a conduct that diſgraces the dignity of human nature: the laſt advice I can poſſibly condeſcend to give a man who forgets what is due to his quality muſt be ſhort —Quit that woman—I know her—ſhe ſaved me, as ſhe has done you—I was

ſhut

ſhut up in that priſon for a generous action; you for a baſe one—me ſhe could not ſeduce; with you ſhe ſucceeded, becauſe your ſoul was degraded by the circumſtance which placed you within the circle of her enchantments."

Having uttered theſe words in a voice of diſpleaſure, he turned as if going towards the inn.

" Stop," cried the infatuated Paramour, " and before you go aſk my pardon for the abuſe you daringly laviſh on the lady I honour with my protection. If I am no longer a gentleman at all points, yet I know how to take up the character when my friend is inſulted. Are you ready, Mr. William, to make your apologies?"

" If any are neceſſary," retorted Corſange, " I have to offer them to my own underſtanding, which I own to have very

very much offended by entering into converſation with a man whom I have never truly known till now. Clear yourſelf of the diſhoneſty with which you have impeached your own character, or never think I ſhall condeſcend to draw my ſword on a raſcal."

Corſange again walked calmly away, whilſt his adverſary ſet up a horſe laugh, calling after him to ſay, that as he had left his purſe behind him, againſt which he had no manner of reſentment, he ſhould take as much care of it in his abſence as of the lady herſelf.

Corſange, on returning to the inn, accounted for his abſence by giving a faithful relation of his chance interview with the Chevalier d'Egeville; nor was the interment of Dorance made known until many hours after, when he received into his boſom the tears of his grateful wife, as well as the thanks of the Marquis and

Marchioneſs

Marchioneſs for the affliction he had ſaved them from experiencing.

We ſhall now meet with no more adventures through our whole journey; we have, therefore, nothing more to do than haſten on our travellers, that, together with the patient reader, they may witneſs the alterations making in the Foreſt of Chamboran.

Thirty men were employed to enlarge the fortreſs, and to ornament the outſide with balconies after the moſt light and beautiful manner; to which was added a ſuperb chapel, conſecrated by the Archbiſhop of Grenoble. The garden had entirely changed its form, except the rivulet, the little bridge, the arbour, and the large poplar; theſe alone were preſerved entire: every other part of the garden took the form of a delicious park, and the fortreſs of a magnificent chateau; one chamber only was ſuffered

to

to remain in its priſtine ſtate—it was that from the window of which our hero had been ſo much alarmed on the firſt night of his arrival by the funereal ceremony: to this chamber William conveyed his books and muſical inſtruments, for it was exceedingly dear to him.

The gloomy foreſt, once an object of terror to all who ventured to penetrate its deep receſſes, now received all the embelliſhments of which the moſt tremendous works of nature are capable under the direction of taſte and the hands of induſtry: that terrible banditti, who before had taken up their reſidence in its intricacies, frequented it no more; and at every turning of the roads the fearleſs traveller might find a direction by which to conduct his doubtful ſteps—fine walks, noble viſtas, light and ſhade, rendered this once-diſmal foreſt a perfect paradiſe; and certainly we may add, that the Firſt-created Pair could

could enjoy no greater or purer happiness than was experienced by our charming FORESTERS, the graceful William and his beautiful Marienna!

THE END.

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